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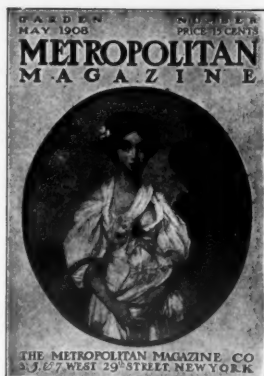
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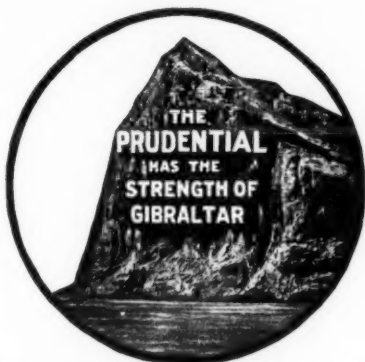
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VOL. XXI

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Monthly Publication issued by AINSLEE MAGAZINE CO., Seventh Avenue and Fifteenth Street, New York.
 Ormond G. Smith, President; George C. Smith, Secretary and Treasurer, 79-89 Seventh Avenue, New York City.
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 Entered September 11, 1902, at New York as Second-class Matter, under Act of Congress of March 2, 1879.

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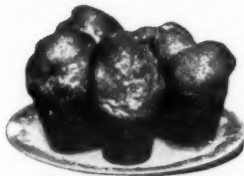
Mother's pastry was always good because her *shortening* was always good and the only shortening she knew was leaf lard--- *genuine* leaf lard. That's exactly what "Simon Pure" Lard is, only it really is *better* than home-made lard can be because of the uniform excellence found *only* in "Simon Pure." Besides, mother could not get as good raw leaf as we do. We have the pick of thousands of pieces daily---she had only what her butcher could give her. It's due to these specially selected, crinkly, edible leaves--- refined by honest, Quality-producing methods---that "Simon Pure" is the finest lard on earth---the "Cream of Short-



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FRIED food is as nutritious as that which is baked or boiled, in spite of the solemn protests of faddists who declare that it is most indigestible. If it proves unhealthful, the cause may be traced to one of two things ---the frying process has been unskillfully performed, or more often, the lard used was of an inferior quality.

"Frying" means immersing the article to be cooked in fat that covers it. In the last analysis it is steaming. The moment the article to be cooked touches



"Simon Pure" Pop-Overs

the fat, its surface becomes coagulated, making it impossible for the natural juices to get out. These are turned into steam, which cooks the food. The fat merely browns the outer surface. About three pounds of Armour's Simon Pure Leaf Lard will be required for use in a kettle eight inches in diameter. This may appear to be an extravagance to a housekeeper whose idea of frying consists in greasing the bottom of a frying pan with a tiny bit of fat. As a matter of fact, frying in deep fat is an econ-

omy as well as an absolute necessity from the standpoint of health.

The fat should not be boiling, but "smoking" hot. A good general rule regarding temperature is this: If a slice of raw potato browns in it from 40 to 60 seconds, the fat is ready for use. Generally speaking, doughnuts and batters require a lower heat than breaded meats, and the latter do not require as high a temperature as potatoes, fish and all watery articles, which must be fried at the highest possible temperature.



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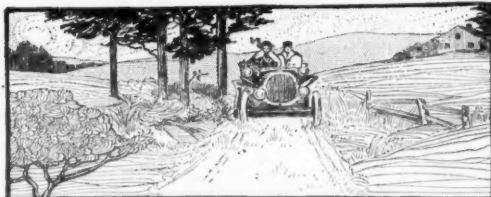
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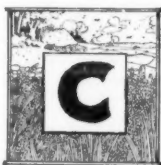
VOL. XXI.

MAY, 1908.

No. 4.



THE WHITE FLIER *BY* LEDITH MACVANE



CHILHAM ABBEY, the ancient seat of the Bodley family of Westmoreland, was in a very unwonted state of bustle and life. For not only was Sir Hamilton Bodley, with his American wife, expected home to-day from his long wanderings over the face of the globe; but in the west wing of the Abbey a wedding-party was assembled. Daphne Medlycott, the beautiful daughter of Sir Hamilton's widowed aunt, was marrying the American to whom, for ten long years, she had been engaged; and who now, finally enriched by successful maneuvers of the copper market, had at last returned to claim her.

In the drawing-room, a highly select company inspected the wedding-presents; and discoursed on dear Daphne's luck, and wondered when Sir Hamilton would arrive, and what his new American wife would be like, and whether she had succeeded in reforming her husband's shockingly impossible habits. It was these habits of his, indeed, which had led his despairing father, some years before, to pack his precious son off on a voyage around the world.

This "Rake's Progress," of which spicy rumors came back now and then to enliven the respectable Westmoreland world, had been prolonged over the old gentleman's death, and the consequent accession of the Rake in question to the ancient baronetage. Now at least he was a baronet, he was married, he was doubtless much improved. Was he coming yet? Interest in this question ran high. How perfectly divvy, my dear, if he and Lady Stars-and-Stripes Bodley should walk in at this moment!

The amiable interest of the wedding-guests was doomed, however, to disappointment. Just at this moment Mrs. Medlycott, pausing in the final arrangement of her daughter's tulle veil, was tearing open a telegram handed her by Nash, the ancient butler of the Abbey.

Arrived in Liverpool. Hamilton too ill to travel. Hope to reach Chilham in a few days. Regrets and congratulations.

V. BODLEY.

Here was a disappointment! And moreover, every one that knew Sir Hamilton Bodley knew with regrettable certainty what the nature of his illness must be. Hardly had the aunt of the expected baronet exploded in the vexed

regret that such a message must produce, than a tap at the door announced Tom Codrington. Tom was the curate of Chilham, the infatuated slave of the bride, and the old friend of the bridegroom, Richard Sugden.

Another disappointment! Tom came to announce an inevitable delay in the ceremony. Just now, in his capacity as best man, he had glanced over the license which Dick had procured yesterday in the near-by village of Wick. What had he found? A stupid flaw, consequent on the deafness of the aged town-clerk. He had reversed the names! Permission to marry, etc., was thereby given to Richard Medlycott and Daphne Sugden!

So Dick, not yet having his own car, and finding in the stables of an absentee owner no horse-flesh to speed him on his way, was off hot-foot to Wick by the short cut across the park. It was unfortunate—the time was near at hand, the guests were waiting, the bride was dressed and decorated, the dean was putting on his surplice in the little east room. Dick, however, hoped to be back within the half-hour. And Daphne was not to worry—on no account was dear Daphne to worry!

"I'm not worrying!" returned the bride, with serene confidence. Her affection for her husband-to-be, though very steadfast and pleasant, was not precisely of the passionate kind to wring her heart at this delay. "I think it was rather stupid of Dick, but it can't be helped now. And anyway, as our train doesn't leave Wick till four o'clock, and it's only noon now, we shall be able to catch the Great Northern to-night just as we planned. A flaw in the license, what's that?" She laughed her little ladylike laugh. "If Dick had never come back from America, or if it had been another wife turning up, there might have been something to worry about. But a half-hour's delay! Tom, you may run away now. Mama, this sprig of white lilac just a little higher over the left ear, please."

So in Chilham Abbey, bride and wedding-guests sat and waited for Dick Sugden's return.

II.

Dick Sugden, striding swiftly over the dewy grass of the park, cursed himself for an incompetent idiot. That he, who heretofore had made such a success of everything he touched, should thus bungle the most important event of his life! His prolonged struggle with the copper-sharks of distant Montana, to say nothing of his more recent experiences in Wall Street, New York, might have taught him to read a document before accepting it. He had not even the excuse of a blind delirious happiness to excuse his negligence. His affection for his bride-to-be, though profound, was not exactly of that sort. No, none of that kind of nonsense for *them*.

Unaccountably, through the hurrying determination of his errand, Dick was aware of a little pang—a little pang felt before. How absurd of him at his age—Dick was thirty-one—to sigh for the raptures of two-and-twenty. He was about to marry the most charming girl in the world—could one ask for a more blooming beauty, or a more steadfast fidelity than she had given him? And for anything more exhilarating—pshaw, if she could give it, was it certain that he retained the youthful fire to profit by it? For the rest, Daphne Medlycott was the dearest girl in the world. This point had been established as an almost legalized fact, many years ago, and his fidelity to her was the habit of a third part of his life.

On under the big trees, scaring the little rabbits into the green distance, and even routing out occasionally the distant glimpse of a deer; down the wooded bank of the tiny trout-stream, across the little stone bridge, up the other bank again. Used though he was to violent physical exertion, Dick's breath began to come short and the veins to swell upon his forehead. If only the deserted stables of Chilham had been able to supply something beside the old lame mare with which the butler did his errands—if he himself, instead of delaying the purchase of his automobile till after his marriage, had had that invaluable machine here upon

the spot! Perhaps, indeed, he would be able to hire a gig in Wick for the return trip. If he delayed too long, what would people say, and how would Daphne feel?

It was curious how thoroughly he realized that, in spite of Daphne's undoubted affection for him, her chief concern would be not with his conduct itself, but his conduct as viewed by the little world which was her world. In all the ten years of his past life, first in the wild freedom of Western America, then in the strenuous independence of New York, it seemed to him that he had never heard so many references to the court of other people's opinion as he had in the fortnight since coming back to Chilham again. It was "What will the dear countess think?" and "What will the dean say?" till Sugden had more than once found himself on the point of breaking out in open and blasphemous self-assertion.

He was, to use his own phrase, caught too old to find this sudden immersion in the tranquil orderliness of English country life anything but stifling. His life since the brief European trip which had won for him the acquaintance and pledge of his future wife, had been one of exhilarating hazard, of fierce endeavor, of hardly won success. Till at last two years ago the sudden amazing development of a piece of mining property had landed him first in the front rank of copper producers; then by the leaps and bounds of fortune, in the junior partnership of a New York brokerage house.

He skirted a turnip-field, to avoid soiling his immaculate new shoes in the mire. The spectacle of a young gentleman in a Prince Albert coat, silk hat and encrimsoned visage, racing hot-foot past a turnip-field, struck him suddenly as sufficiently unexpected to satisfy the exacting tastes even of an individual bored and maddened by two weeks of the cramping gentility of Chilham. His laboring breath came more cheerfully.

Then in sight at last was the hedge that bordered the Great North Road. Only five minutes to Wick! After all, he would be back in fairly decent time.

Now the Americanism on which Dick prided himself had, doubtless, its advantage; nevertheless, no Englishman would have made the mistake with which he found himself suddenly confronted.

The hedge! Undoubtedly he had heard Tom Codrington say a few moments ago: "Don't forget the hedge!" But with the easy optimism about hedges of the dweller in a new country, he had promptly rushed off and forgotten the warning. Why should a few bushes, planted in a row, be an affair for a man in his urgent situation either to remember or forget? But now that he found himself faced up before something resembling the Great Wall of China done in green, about eight feet high and three feet through, he understood the value of Tom's unheeded warning.

Dick stood still, surveying the mass of leaf and thorns which rose above him as smug and impenetrable as that other wall of Chilham social custom against whose pricks he had so often kicked in vain. Though now that he found himself face to face with the deserved condemnation of that Chilham world, he found his attitude of easy superiority oozing painfully away.

Not to be on hand at his own wedding—to keep his bride waiting! Curse that hedge that held him from the road, there *must* be a way around it!

In furious questioning, up and down his eye traveled. At a short distance from him, an ancient "No Trespassing" sign rose just beside the hedge. The board with its warning inscription was weather-beaten from all usefulness, and furthermore concealed by the rising growth of the hedge. The post, however, was about the thickness of a telegraph-pole and still intact. With a gasp of relief, Dick turned and ran toward it.

A bit of bog through which he ran mired his shoes unpleasantly. That fact, however, was of small importance. The main feature of the case was the discovery that, from the top of the moss-grown post, a pair of reasonably active legs might hope—not be certain, but hope—to spring over the horrible in-

tervening barrier into the freedom of the road outside.

Dick, swiftly surveying the situation, stripped off his immaculate, satin-lined, Poole-made coat, wrapped it into a rapid ball and hurled it over the hedge. His hat followed. Retreat being thus cut off, he spat on his hands and prepared to swarm up the post.

The next instant, by a mighty effort, he "chinned himself," and like Saint Simeon Stylites in a white piqué waistcoat, he stood balancing himself on the little wooden disk, eight feet from the ground, which formed the top of the post.

Beneath, a full yard across, lay the flat green floor of the hedge. Far below on the other side was the dusty white highroad, with his hat in full view. Dick's suspicious eye glared up and down—not a soul in sight, luckily, to remark the ridiculous figure he made! He took in his breath.

There was no doubt, the leap was a nasty one. Desperately he crouched, gathered his forces, and sprang.

Beneath his feet his point of support yielded sickeningly. His body fell crashing through the hedge. The hot white road rose up to meet him. It came swiftly, and hit hard. For a moment, the very force of the shock knocked all realization from Dick's brain, as it had knocked all the wind from his body. He lay motionless, conscious only of the blazing heat of the macadam, and of the exceeding comfort of being able to lie still for a moment, even on so uncomfortable a couch.

But the furious necessity which had urged him to that desperate leap, whipped him none the less imperatively from his instant's breathless repose. He opened his eyes. There just before him, sprawling in the white dust, was his coat. At a little distance lay his hat, dented and whitened. "Who would have thought that post was going to give way like that?" he reflected regretfully, as he raised himself heavily on his knees. His next exclamation was, regrettably, of much less pious a character.

"Oh, damn!"

He sank back heavily to a sitting position, with his left leg extended stiffly in front of him. From knee to instep it was made no longer of alertly responsive muscles, but of one numb, twanging ache.

He sat stupefied, gazing at the rigidly extended limb. His sight, however, was somewhat obscured by the closing of one eye, and by the warm blood which oozed from a long scratch in his forehead. With his handkerchief, he covered up this damage so far as was possible, then turned his despairing attention back to the leg which lay helplessly before him. Then in mechanical inquiry, he tried to bend it. The resulting movement was outwardly a mere twitch, inwardly a startling agony quite out of proportion to the result attained. However, no bones were broken and the knee-joint was intact; so much that painful reflex motion assured to him. The damage, torturing though it might be, was no more than a wrench. So long as the bones held together, that leg was good to carry him on—Daphne was waiting for him—he *must* go on.

"A trifle of physical pain," he said to himself, with great resolution. "After all, what's that?" So, to show his command over his own muscles, and the perfectly hopeful character of the situation, he reached out for his dust-smear coat, shook it and put it on. Likewise, his hat. The success of this operation filled him with hope. No longer in his shirt-sleeves, he appeared his own man once more. The empty highroad, for which a few moments ago he had thanked his fortune, appeared less unmixed a blessing. If a stray farmer's cart, or dignified country equipage, should come along at this moment, he would be willing to own the gratefulness of the sight. At this lunch-hour of noon, however, the road was empty.

He took a long breath, clamped his teeth over his lower lip, and rose to his feet.

Three steps, by mere force of will, he walked. Then, not for lack of resolution but merely because the injured muscles were helpless to obey the com-

mand sent down to them from the brain, the unfortunate leg flinched—doubled up like a rusty tin pipe. Road and hedge swam together before Dick's eyes in a kaleidoscope whirl of white and green. The next fact which presented itself clearly to his mind was the spectacle of himself, seated once more on the blazing macadam. He folded his arms, and gazed down the road.

Could there be for a self-respecting man—an American, moreover, desirous of cutting a dignified figure in the eyes of the old country—a more ludicrous, a more hopelessly foolish position?

Dick's tongue, backed by a spirited imagination and a not inconsiderable experience, had already exhausted its stock of expletives on the events of this most unhappy morning. A few epithets, however, were left for bestowal on the barren expanse of the highroad.

Suddenly he drew in his breath. Far down the road, between the green perspective of hedges, appeared a pale blur of dust.

He was saved! Aid was coming to him at last! Swiftly the flying vehicle drew toward him. The brass headlamps of the huge, white, onrushing car, shining in the sun, grew suddenly big and bright. With a furious effort, Dick struggled to his feet.

The hum of the car grew louder—louder. Its sudden blast shrieked a frantic warning. Desperately, like the lame duck of the proverb, Dick hopped toward the side of the road. But his right leg, weakened by the shock which had crippled its mate, crumpled under the double stress thus put upon it. Swaying to and fro, Dick supported himself upright. He waved his arms frantically.

"Hi!" he shouted. "Help, there! Help! Hi!"

The car swerved so violently as barely to escape a skid. Its roar was in his ears, the hot breath of its gasoline fumes scorched his face in their terrifying nearness. Then the dry, reassuring puff of dust.

Again Dick shouted with fierce insistence:

"Hi! hello, there! Help, I say, help!"

The motor's speed had already slackened. Dick stared in delighted amazement. He had had no idea, really, that the thing would stop. Being something of an automobilist himself, he had to admire not only the kindly consideration of the driver but the beautiful manufacture of the car itself, as he watched the ease and promptitude with which its velocity was controlled. Then wheeling in a half-circle, it came smoothly back to the spot where he sat.

Never in Dick Sugden's life, probably, had he felt the deep thankfulness which was his at that moment. He straightened himself to receive the aid of his approaching benefactor. With a click of levers, the car came to a full stop beside him. Dick, kneeling in the dust, gazed upward. Not till this moment had he observed the fact that the driver of this reckless but obliging car was a woman.

Veils, goggles and a Parisian motor-coat of raw silk, served to obscure from the beholder all facts save this central one of her sex.

"I'm sorry to bother you, but you see I've had an accident——" Dick began. His remarks were, however, cut short by the lady who, leaning down over her steering-wheel, addressed him in a voluble flood of French.

Dick was nonplused. The fact of the chauffeur's sex had been a blow sufficiently hard to bear; now when, for the first time in his conscious existence, he so emphatically needed the aid of a man's efficient arm—but a French-woman!

Dick's French—a survival of a happy fortnight which, just previous to his engagement to Daphne, he had spent in Paris with little Tom Codrington—was now badly attenuated by ten years of American disuse. However, this was no time for halting over words.

"*J'ai fait une injure,*" he began. Then, remembering that *injure* meant insult, and might lead him into fresh troubles, he stopped short. His gesture toward his wounded leg, however, was more eloquent. The lady understood at once.

"*Oui, oui, je comprends bien, ça!*"

she cried impatiently. "*Eh bien, monsieur, montez, montez!*"

Her voice ran and thrilled with a curious excitement, which fell pleasantly on Dick's ear. After his month's experience of respectable British immobility it was something, even for a moment, to come in contact with a woman to whom an adventure, ever so small, was still an adventure. And through the mica screen which covered them, her eyes looked out large and bright. Dick smiled at her cheerfully as he hoisted himself to an upright position. The injured limb dangled limply, as he stood for one painful moment gripping the side of the machine. Even in that breathless instant, his eyes took in the details of a beautiful six-cylinder car of German manufacture—a seven-passenger car of the most modern design, shining, powerful and exquisite. Certainly a very desirable equipage to enter, but——

The lady burst into a little nervous laugh.

"*Ca se voit bien, vous avez besoin de mon aide!*" she exclaimed in tones of sudden melting; and indeed Dick Sugden's handsome face, even when not softened by the wistful appeal of a violent physical suffering, was one which few women could regard without kindness. In the twinkling of an eye, she had whisked from the car and stood beside him in the dust.

She was a little thing. Even in her bulky, veil-wrapped Paris hat, she stood hardly higher than his ear. Nevertheless, she offered him her shoulder with an indomitable courage. He hesitated. The shoulder was so slender, and the bulk which it offered to support was so ridiculously huge! She stamped her foot.

"*Si vous vous figurez que je n'ai point de muscle, monsieur!*" she protested scornfully. She seized his elbow in a hand which, though small, was surprisingly firm. "*Vite, vite!*" she cried. "*Ca presse! Montez, monsieur, montez!*"

Her actual words, as spoken, left a confused impression in the mind of the unfortunate bridegroom. There was no

mistaking, however, the urgent benevolence of the hand which gripped his elbow, or the shoulder which raised and stiffened itself in the offer of support. He ceded gratefully.

"It's disgusting to put weight like this on a woman," he answered swiftly, in the ready if uncomprehended efficiency of his native tongue. "But there's no one else in sight, and since you're so good—here goes, madame!"

The tortured tendons wrenched themselves all together in a sickening pang. The next instant, his battered form was deposited comfortably in the deep leather cushions of the car. His benefactress, whipping back to her place beside him, paused for one breathless instant to lean over into the tonneau and produce a tweed motor-cap with goggles attached. Even in his present painful confusion of body and mind, Dick was conscious of the absurd figure which his silk hat and bandaged eye cut in an automobile. So while his companion, with a practised hand, threw the starting-lever, he gratefully assumed the offered head-dress. The mechanism beneath them quivered into life, and the car resumed its flying journey toward Wick.

Even in the two minutes or less before the green hedges gave way to neat little shops of glass and gray brick, Dick Sugden had time for one or two consecutive thoughts. His chief sensation, naturally, was gratitude for relief from the horrible situation which faced him an instant ago. Only half-past twelve by the village clock on the right—it would be odd, indeed, if he could not be back at Chilham by one. Not so very bad, considering!

Yes, he was duly thankful. But down beneath his thankfulness, lay a confused medley of thoughts—amazement at the grinding pain which one leg was able to send through a whole system; delight at the familiar sensation of keen-drawn air and flashing landscape; amazement at the reckless speed at which his companion drove; and most insistent of all, a puzzled curiosity concerning that companion herself. Young she must be, to judge by the quick lightness of her movements. As

for the rest—the dainty slenderness of the figure defined by the loose silk coat, the graceful lift of her veil-swathed head, the faint odor of violets which her neighborhood exhaled—all these things suggested, even if they did not warrant the idea of beauty.

How did a Frenchwoman, young, pretty and ignorant of the English language, come to be driving a huge motor-car all alone through this Lake-country of Westmoreland—driving, moreover, with a skill to command the respect of a practised automobilist like Dick and at a rate of speed to outrage the local constabulary?

For to Dick's surprise, their entrance on the tranquil village street marked no slackening of their flight. A farmer's cart, laden with fresh lettuces, lumbered placidly down the exact middle of the road. Dick was thrown violently sideways, there was a vision of a plunging horse, a perspective of frantic mothers reclaiming their tow-headed children, a shouted warning from the sidewalk—Dick took in his breath. His leg had had a nasty wrench, but as an exhibition of top-speed driving, the performance was superb. And thank Heaven, there just ahead on the right was the familiar gray belfry of the registrar's office!

At last! In relief too deep for words, the belated bridegroom leaned toward the lady who had so substantially befriended him. "Here we are!" he cried in a voice pitched high to cut the clanging air. "Here we are—will you let me down now, please?"

A high dog-cart, driven by a stiff-elbowed young lady, was just at that instant claiming the attention of the little chauffeur. She cut to the left, swooped back again, and on at the same thundering speed. The dignified outlines of the registrar's office flashed by like a steam-driven panorama. Dick leaned forward with a frantic gesture and a sudden shout.

"There's where I've got to go!" he cried urgently. "*Voilà! Voilà! Arrêtez, madame—arrêtez!*"

The veil-wrapped head did not turn, the mica-covered eyes continued to stare

straight ahead. Was she deaf, Dick asked himself desperately, or was his French so very bad.

"*Madame! Arrêtez, s'il vous plaît!*"

This time a slight motion of the head showed that, whether understood or not, his words had at least been heard. They were nearing the northern end of the village. If his last case was not to be worse than his first, he absolutely must manage to alight here. In spite of the horrible pain which the slightest movement sent shooting through his twisted muscles, he leaned sideways and caught the girl imperatively by the shoulder.

"Will you stop, please?" he commanded shortly. Her head did not turn. Even beneath the fierce clutch of his fingers, the slight shoulder remained curiously tense and rigid—one would say, the flesh of a woman driven by some inward purpose so compelling as to make her unconscious even of the indignity of a stranger's touch. Something like this thought ran through Dick's brain, and with it the thrill of a sudden unpleasant foreboding. Was it possible, it was of fixed and actual intention that she refused him understanding?

The glazed shop-windows, the paved sidewalks slipped away behind them. Before them, level and empty, lay again the hedge-bordered highway. The driver's little right hand flew up from the steering-post—toward the hand-brake? Dick's sigh of relief changed to a sudden gasp of dismay. For the hand went not to the braking-handle but to the change-speed gear. The next instant the car was leaping northward at a rate of at least fifty miles an hour.

III.

For an instant, the sensation of rack-ing pain was driven from Dick's mind by a horrified amazement. Despite their mutual ignorance of each other's language, it was impossible that the woman beside him did not understand his wish to alight. By what motive was she urged—insanity, crime, or wanton mischief?

On this point her sphinxlike figure

gave no enlightenment. With both hands on the steering-wheel she sat slightly bent forward, tense, alert, guiding her thundering car with the precision of a Paris *mécanicien*. Under any other circumstances, Dick might have admired her nerve and her skill. But now behind him, every moment a mile farther behind him, sat the very reverend dean waiting in his surplice; and Daphne waiting in her wedding-dress.

In impotent rebellion, Dick's soul rose against the racking physical weakness which thus placed his very honor at the mercy of this stray passerby. Suddenly his heart leaped in a repetition of the same unspeakable relief which ten minutes ago it had experienced at the coming of the white car which now carried him away as its victim. For, whirling suddenly around a curve in the green-bordered highroad, another automobile was thundering toward him.

Dick's resolution was instantaneous. As the car in which he rode swerved swiftly to the left, he rose in his seat as nearly as his throbbing limb would permit. His battered silk hat waved frantically in his hand, and all dignity was flung away to serve his biting need.

"Hi, hi!" he shouted. "Help, there! Help!"

The flying chiffon veil of his captor, streaming between him and the passing car, cut him off from any more effective communication that the view of a pair of phlegmatic goggles turned for an instant toward him. In the fierce suction of air created by the meeting of the two speeding vehicles, his shouted words were torn away and lost. In a cloud of dust, the other automobile whirled on. Distance between them swelled like a shadow. It was evident, his frenzied cry had been taken for nothing more serious than the jibe of a facetious 'Arry on a holiday. In a sudden wave of shame he perceived the total hopelessness of a shout for help, whether on country road or in city crowd. A man of his inches, screaming to be saved from a slip of a girl in silk coat and streaming white chiffon veil—the blood

blazed to his cheek in sudden mortification as he realized the picture thus presented.

No, his former resolution had been the correct one—he could wish that he had held to it. What was to be done, he must, in spite of a growing physical helplessness, contrive to do for himself.

The first necessity, obviously, was to obtain control of the car. For an able-bodied man to obtain the object of his desire from the hands of a small and slightly built woman would not appear a very difficult matter. But the brutality of the business aside, a snatch at the steering-wheel might end in no less than fatal results. A mere touch upon the driver's arm, at their present high rate of speed, might very well send the automobile crashing headlong into the roadside.

And furthermore, when it came to the business of seizing a motor by force, to say nothing of running it afterward, the sad fact remained that he was *not* able-bodied. The sharp throbs of the injured leg, extended stiffly before him, reminded him imperatively of this fact. His whole body was weakened by the pain. His bruised head had begun to turn slightly giddy. With strong resolution, he fought off this rising feebleness.

On the car pounded. The moments fled by with the mile-posts. The road, which had been for some time rising steadily, took a sudden sharp turn. With a hoarse shriek of the horn, the flying motor took it on two wheels. Below them, suddenly revealed, lay the shimmering blue waters of Windermere.

Before them, winding steadily up the hillside which bordered the lake, stretched the sunlit white coils of the road. Biting back the pain which strangled his throat, Dick Sugden watched his chance.

It came as they reached the winding upward incline of the road. With automatic precision the silent driver checked the speed-lever, which she had placed at third for the passing of the vehicles just enumerated, back to the second again. Then she jerked the

hand-brake. The car was a gallant hill-climber, so much was certain. But the incline was sharp. Even with the increase of power, the quivering motor fell to a bare fifteen-mile speed.

Here was the prisoner's chance. In a sudden fierce effort, he dominated the painful weakness which motion cost him. He leaned past the driver and seized the wheel. "With your leave, madame, I'll take charge of this car now!" he said firmly.

But his hands were pushed from the wheel with a vigor which surprised him—a force which, in so slight a woman, could be nothing else than the strength of desperation. The veil-wrapped face was thrust close to his own, the eyes sparkled through their mica covering.

"*Osez-le, monsieur! Osez! Osez!*" For an instant at least, the silence of his mysterious captor was broken by the one scornful word, hissed in his ear. If it served no other purpose, the tone in which it was spoken brought suddenly home to Dick the impossibility of his using his strength, even in its present battered condition, against a woman. He sank back in his seat, and nursed his throbbing leg.

Then it occurred to him that a logical explanation of his plight, should a relaxation in their speed admit it, might possibly obtain his release from his obstinate captor.

But whether it was her preoccupation, the hurricane rush of the air, or her inability to understand, certain it was that she paid no attention to his hurried and desperate tale. First in English, then in such doggerel scraps of French as he could command, he shouted in her ear the leading facts of the wedding and the waiting bride. If his words penetrated the layers of clanging air and of enveloping gauze veil, at least she gave no sign. To the right she turned, up the long straight Roman road which leads to Carlisle.

This name, flashed upon him for one flying instant from a sign-board at the crossroads, knocked upon his soul with a strange familiarity. It was at Carlisle, to-night, that he and his bride were to take the Great Northern for

London. If of sufficient size and importance to provide a stopping-place for the most famous train in the world, it must certainly be able to compel a modified speed for a reckless motorist. At Carlisle, beyond a doubt, he would obtain deliverance and a speedy return home.

So he sat silent, with folded arms and clinched jaws. If he was to make any use of his coming opportunity for freedom, it was obviously necessary that he husband the forces still left to him.

Dick Sugden surveyed the beautiful landscape with a dull eye. He was congratulating himself, in a languid ramble of thought, on the very state of things which an hour or more ago had formed the subject of a wistful regret. What would be Daphne's state of mind at this instant if, in addition to the pangs of mortified pride which she must be undergoing, she were suffering also the anguish of the passionate love for which, a short time ago, he had almost longed?

No—under the existing outrageous situation, it was matter for thankfulness that his marriage with Daphne Medlycott was no union of frantically clinging hearts, but a businesslike, matter-of-fact, eminently suitable alliance. A little subconscious thought, half-recognized and ruthlessly snubbed out of existence, floated for an instant below these eminently correct ruminations. This girl beside him, who showed so ruthless a purpose in working out her own wild schemes, whatever they might be—would it be possible to picture her as the heroine of a matter-of-fact and eminently suitable alliance? His blood thrilled oddly. If this bright-eyed, mysterious being beside him chose to give herself, could she not be pictured as flying to the man she loved, with the same wild ardor as that with which she now urged her humming motor northward?

In a fury of shame, Dick flung back the thought. Not only in outward involuntary act but in inward thought, was he to be false to the bride who waited for him?

Straight up the road built by the an-

cient conquerors of Britain, the automobile held swiftly to the north. Dick's breath came short. His leg was in sore need of dressing and bandaging, so much was certain.

The afternoon hours wore on. His wonders grew and grew. Who was this girl beside him? What was she? And what was her motive for acting as she did?

He wondered what, could he communicate intelligently with her, would be her replies and her explanation. And in the midst of his wonder, he remembered the oddly thrilling voice in which, back there in Chilham road, she had addressed her few remarks to him. His forgetfulness of spoken French had robbed him of anything but the general tenor of her meaning; but the tones in which her words were spoken came back to him. The voice of a woman whose heart is full, whose very throat is fiercely stiffened to resist some overwhelming, some supreme emotion.

According to the conventional view, the gentle emotion of love was the only one which could key a woman to this desperate and unreasonable degree. But even in that case, love must have its object; and he was very certain that he himself could not be that object. Vanity apart, he was tolerably certain that among the lady part of his acquaintance, whether here or in America, there existed no damsel pining with a passion which might prompt her thus to kidnap him. Beside, this woman in face, gesture, and voice was utterly unfamiliar to him.

Was it possible, after all, that this was a case of mistaken identity—of one of those marvelous physical resemblances of which one reads so often in novels and occasionally in the newspapers? If that were so, what was the nature of her connection with the man for whom she had mistaken him? Again, and with an odd thrill, he was aware of that former little tingle at his heart.

Yes, he would acknowledge a certain regret if he were obliged to leave the affair behind him as an unsolved mystery. And yet, in the wind-blown

curves of the girl's figure, in the soft birdlike movements of the little untiring hands, there was something oddly appealing, strangely feminine. The flying gusts of air brought to him every now and then a perfume which carried its own subtle enchantment.

Daphne refused to use scent; she declared the habit vulgar. Since she said so, perhaps it was. And yet—Again the flowerlike breath flew past his nostrils. Violets—yes, it was Russian violets, was it not?

He brought himself up short. Absurd, unmanly, thus to find softness in his heart for the woman who had so wantonly betrayed his appeal to her kindness. And yet—was it below his dignity, to own that she had good taste in perfumes? Was it to be false to Daphne, to confess that beneath this girl's multifarious wrappings, it was probable that a certain amount of beauty lay concealed?

A sudden gust of wind, tearing at the closely pinned chiffon veil, sent a vagrant streamer suddenly tossing. Unfortunately, the part which concealed the face still remained faithful to its duty. No more than a very small portion of the throat was displayed to the inquiring eyes of the gazer—the little triangle whose base is the collar and whose apex is the lobe of the ear. And against it curled a tiny glinting ring of pale-brown hair.

A quick hand drew the veil taut again. Dick turned away his eyes. He had not seen much, to be sure. Yet what he had seen vouched for the owner's youth, her prettiness, her coquetry—perhaps the most potent arguments which a woman can bring to a man sitting in judgment on her. So strong, indeed, were they in this case that the reaction of self-reproach was almost too violent for Dick's enfeebled forces. Was the girl Circe herself, to capture not only his body but his eyes?

The purpose which for the past few hours had held him, mounted to a sudden feverish obsession. Escape, escape from this horrible woman who was stealing not only himself but his loyalty from Daphne!

By this time they were approaching the city. Already his companion had diminished the speed of the car, in order to run through one of the crowded purlieus of the town. It was plain, she intended to skirt the city rather than to cross it. Dick took in his breath. His impulse of escape mounted through blood and brain like a whirling vertigo. He rose to his feet, and crouched for a desperate jump.

Suddenly he felt himself seized from behind, by the flying skirts of his wedding-coat. Against that firm hand, his enfeebled forces could make but an insufficient resistance. He turned quickly—the car lurched to one side. His injured leg twisted up under him. A spasm of excruciating pain ran through him. Car, sunshine and road turned to a gray blur, then sank away from under him.

He lay quite supine, his head against the cushions of the car. And the driver held on steadily for the north.

IV.

Dick's first impression, after the torpor of weakness had begun to clear itself from his brain, was of a keen seawind blowing freshly in his face. The salt air was so delicious, so life-giving, that merely to inhale it seemed wonder enough—a wonder beside which the monotonous fact of the car's continued flight seemed hardly worth remarking. It seemed to him that not for hours, but for days and weeks, the thrill of that rapid motor had been beneath him, the shriek of its frequent siren in his ears. The one thing which now could startle him into opening his eyes would be not motion, but the almost forgotten novelty of a halt.

How many minutes, or days, it was since this last thought had struck across his numbed brain he did not know. But suddenly he was aware of a cessation of vibration beneath him, and a curious rooted sense of inertia. He opened his eyes and stared about him with a languid wonder.

Where were the gray chimneys and lowering smoke-cloud of the city, on

which he had closed his eyes? All around him stretched an interminable flatness of green; far before him, dim gray hills; to the left, the shimmering white sea. It was evident, in his temporary unconsciousness he had been carried past the city of Carlisle where he had hoped to find deliverance.

This fact, however, brought no indignation with it. He lay quite still, gazing at the overcast sky, and wondering whether the approaching rain-storm would find them still in the open.

Suddenly it struck him that, considering the misery in which his senses had left him, he lay in singular comfort now. In his own Morris-chair he could hardly have been more deftly, more softly supported. The surprise of this fact impelled him to lift his head and make investigation. Sure enough, he lay in a nest of brown morocco cushions. They supported his back, his head. A mountain of them held his lame leg extended easefully. In mechanical inquiry he turned his head. Yes, the tonneau had been stripped bare, its exposed mahogany lockers glared up at him reproachfully. There was no denying, some one had taken kind thought for him as he slept.

That girl! Yes, there was a girl here just now. Slowly the astounding events of the day rearranged themselves in his mind. Regret for what lay far away was, however, driven from his mind by the perplexity of the immediate present. That girl who was here just now—where was she?

Up and down the white road he glared. The road was as empty as the green salt-marshes through which it wound. A little cold shock closed over his heart. Was it possible she had deserted him?

Suddenly from the back of the automobile stepped a welcome apparition. In its arms it carried a leather suitcase. Its white veil was pushed up to its mica mesh, leaving exposed a rounded chin and a pair of white lips beautifully molded, but just now pressed together in a distressful, almost despairing constriction. Considering the emotions with which a short time ago he

had regarded this figure, Dick was amazed at the throb of relief and joy which rose in his heart to meet it. He lay quiescent, awaiting further developments.

He had not long to wait. Suddenly to his languid senses came the aroma of a welcome and life-giving elixir. A glass was being held to his lips. Good Glenlivat, welcome at any time, is under some circumstances an agent of life itself. Dick drank gratefully, and over his numbed frame thrilled a quick renewal of life.

His next definite impression was a sudden rending sound, like that of a squall rushing toward a becalmed vessel. Yes—how very odd, she was standing up beside him, with a long white garment between her hands—a filmy garment, with lace ruffles and pink ribbon bows which the sea-wind licked and tantalized. She was tearing it into long lengthwise strips. Her hands were bare; and with an interest quite disproportioned to the actual significance of the fact, Dick noticed that with the exception of a childish turquoise circlet on her right hand, she wore no ring. Also he noticed that above her busy hands, her masked eyes were turned continuously backward, with an oddly nervous gesture, down the road along which they had come.

In spite of this visible preoccupation, she managed to stitch her strips together with a needle and thread taken from her traveling-case; then with swift motions of her flying hands, to roll the bandage into scientific shape. In perplexed and grateful amazement, Dick looked on.

Suddenly she stooped toward him. And his amazement grew, as he beheld her white lips relax in a quiver of sweet compassion. Of all the attributes which he credited to the veiled Amazon who had ruthlessly taken him prisoner, sweetness was perhaps the last. Yet her lips and her quivering chin expressed the very tenderness of pity for his painful predicament. With soft fingers she touched his injured limb.

"*Vous permettez, monsieur?*" she asked hurriedly.

Her voice was as soft as the lips which shaped it; yet through its softness ran and broke the same thrill of subdued excitement which he had noticed in the morning. With a grave unconsciousness, as unashamed as that of a professional, she untied his shoe; then, with a pair of silver-handled scissors she sliced the pale-gray trouser leg from hem to knee; then the knitted silk tissue beneath—the calf and ankle, swollen and much discolored, were exposed to view.

It was not, however, the relief of this operation which impressed itself chiefly upon the patient's mind, nor yet the soothing freshness of the violet water with which, in place of alcohol, his volunteer nurse rubbed the injured member. It was not her skill and sudden kindness which struck him, so much as the fact that the hands which rendered these friendly offices were oddly cold. In spite of the warmth of the June day, and the vigorous employment which all day had claimed them, the girl's two hands were no more than flexible icicles. Below her half-raised veil, her teeth made purple dints on her restless white lip. And continually, her eyes were turned southward down the road.

That she lay under fear, and heavy fear, of pursuit was evident. What fear? What pursuit?

Impatiently, Dick thrust the subject from his mind. If it came to a backward eye on the distress left behind them in the south, he had, to use a slang phrase, troubles of his own. Beside, the really important fact at the moment was the deft white bandage which, with a swift perfection of touch, those little chilly hands were winding about his suffering leg. Then, with precision and despatch, she pulled down the damaged trouser leg, fastened the limp flaps with safe-pins, and wrapped the whole in a light woolen traveling-rug.

The relief consequent on this operation was so tremendous that Dick's just resentment toward the girl who was the agent of its tardiness, was for the moment completely lost in his gratitude. The French expression of thankfulness

is, fortunately, not difficult either to remember or to utter:

"Merci—merci, mademoiselle!"

But with her suit-case the girl had disappeared again behind the tonneau. When she came back it was almost at a run, but with a tin box in her hand.

"Tenez, monsieur!"

Thrusting the box into his hand, she disappeared behind the bonnet of the machine. Dick's interest in the operation of starting left for a moment the tin box unopened in his lap. In the time consumed by relief-measures in his behalf, was the motor dead?

A pulsating roar beneath him answered his question with a sudden warrant of the machine's life. The girl, pulling on her gloves, sprang to her seat beside him. The next moment, brakes and levers clicked into place. And the long green marshes flew behind them as they renewed their mysterious journey toward the north.

Dick's box, when opened, proved to contain a peculiarly appetizing variety of roast-beef sandwich. At the sight, not only the certainty of trouble which lay behind him, but also the possibility of further trouble which lay before, vanished for the moment into thin air. Sandwiches!

He was forced to eat alone, as his companion, with a little wave of her hand, declined the offered box. A volley of swift French seemed to signify that she had eaten before starting, and had no hunger now. Nothing, however, could mar the serenity of Dick's satisfaction or cool the sudden warmth of life which this refreshment sent glowing over his body. The girl beside him was, doubtless, his enemy. Nevertheless he had been sick, and she had visited him—hungry, and she had fed him. The large and elemental simplicity of her benefactions might serve in some measure to cover her sins.

Slowly the misty wall of the northern hills grew nearer.

The dark clouds, which Dick had observed upon his awakening, continued to grow and gather in the sky. An occasional growl of thunder uttered its warning. An hour later, as with un-

flagging speed they flew up the slope of those same hills, the question of shelter from the impending storm had become a serious one.

The country about them was strangely wild and deserted. On the green hillsides grazed innumerable flocks of sheep. Here and there a higher peak rose black and barren. Though Dick had never before been so far to the northward, he knew that he must now be among the Cheviots, the famous border-hills which separate England from her sister kingdom. The Cheviot Hills! Good Heavens, how far was he now from Chillham?

In these northern latitudes the June darkness comes late. It was not, therefore, the twilight of sunset but of swarming thunder-clouds which wrapped them in, when at last a flying descent brought them out of the wilderness of sheep-farms and mists, into the land of human habitation once more.

To be sure the village before them, though the largest since they had passed the Solway, was in point of size insignificant enough. Between the base of a lofty hill and a dried and stony riverbed which told of spring freshets, nestled a few houses of whitewashed brick. Above, a gray church-steeple—below, a comfortable square building with the sign "Muckledean House." Dick almost gasped for joy.

With an appealing urgency, he tried to direct the attention of his companion toward the hospitable sign. There was, however, no need for his anxiety. The next instant the machine had come to a complete and unexpected stop before the wide door of the inn. And the driver, with a little sigh which told of utter weariness, drooped back against the cushioned seat of the car.

V.

By the light of the dozen bedroom candles made necessary by the descending thunder-storm, the village doctor dressed Dick's leg. He was a square-jawed, serious young man with glistening spectacles and a manner of reproachful respectability. He had conde-

scended, however, to utter a word of commendation for the little emergency bandage which he unwound from the injured member, and which now lay in a filmy heap on the floor.

The leg, medical science pronounced after a prolonged examination, had sustained no fracture. The muscles had merely suffered a severe wrench—and not so much a wrench indeed as a bad shaking-up and bruising. Hence, its recovery could probably be quick out of all proportion to its initial painfulness. At this welcome news, Dick almost forgot his brooding anxieties.

"Then, with ordinary care, I ought to be able to use it by the end of the week?"

Hm, the doctor couldna say juist the end of the week precesely, but— There was a knock at the door, and Mrs. Macnaughten, the landlady, entered the room.

Dick, accustomed to the girlish blouses and pompadours affected by the elderly ladies of his own native land, was quite overawed by this majestic person's black silk apron, white fichu and enormous white frilled cap. Her inquiries, however, were kindly: Was the puir young gentleman's leg easier noo, and when did he think he could pick a wee bit of dinner?

At the mention of dinner, Dick's spirits brightened perceptibly. The landlady's enumeration of the dishes which she proposed serving to him, raised his previous mournful perplexity to something like optimism. He could almost see hope, forgiveness, rehabilitation in the future. Accordingly he plunged immediately into the subject which next to dinner formed the most pressing necessity of the moment.

"Can you send a wire for me, Mrs. Macnaughten? Immediately, please?"

The landlady raised her hand in an impressive gesture toward the window. Against its panes the long-threatened storm beat with sufficient force to warrant her solemnity.

"To send out a horse in sic weather as that! For it's eight miles to Tarbooth, sir, and neither rail nor wire nearer. No, ye maun wait."

"But a telephone!" urged Dick in desperation. "Surely I saw a wire leading from the corner of the house?"

A sharp crash of thunder, exploding as it seemed directly above their heads and rumbling away among the hills, made the landlady's response impossible for a moment.

"We have sic a machine, sir," she replied at last, with obvious pride in the innovation, "but you see, we are forbidden to use it in an electrical disturbance of the atmosphere. An' ye'll no be denyin' this atmosphere is disturbed."

A white glare of lightning, splitting the purple twilight and dimming the candles, came to corroborate her words. Dick lay back in despair. Were the very elements conspiring against him?

"It willna be a very important message, sir?"

Dick shook his head slowly. After all, if he could send his message to Daphne, just what would that message be? A frank avowal of the facts in the case? Yes, but consider the significance that these facts, however carefully presented, could not but wear in Daphne's eyes! Her affection, though not of the passionate kind to beget the wildness of jealousy, might nevertheless view with justifiable suspicion the introduction of another woman's name into the tale.

Dick Sugden abhorred deceit. But now, for the first time in his life, he beheld himself face to face with the absolute necessity of falsehood. By hook or by crook, the part which this other woman had played in the affair must be concealed from the deserted bride who waited for him, in what foreboding and humiliation he could guess, back there at Chilham. No, for Daphne's sake as well as for his own, a good round lie was necessary. And as a first step in the erection of his defense, it was plainly required that the name of Muckle-dean must be omitted from the business. Repugnant as the delay was to him, it was clearly better that he should wait for Carlisle in the morning before sending his message to Chilham. In the name of Carlisle there was security, and

an indefinite backing for any story he might be able to fabricate. Meanwhile—

Suddenly he was recalled from his reverie by Mrs. Macnaughten's high-pitched burr.

"Verra weel, sir, then we'll juist let the message wait till the morn." As she spoke, she stooped her comfortable bulk to pick up the little improvised bandage of the afternoon, which the surgeon had dropped beside Dick's chair. Beside the yards and yards of stout linen in which that gentleman was now encasing the injured limb, the airy makeshift in Mrs. Macnaughten's hand looked very frivolous indeed. Here and there in its length a piece of lace fluttered, and an undeniable bow of pink ribbon was still pendent. In suddenly realized misgivings, Dick felt the blood mount to his face.

The landlady, however, surveyed the compromising trifle with sympathetic calmness.

"So she tore up her shift to bind your leg for you—weel, weel, sir, I'll never be saying you are not the lucky man. And that reminds me—Tods, but I was forgettin'! Here's a pair of breeks your gude leddy sent you, to put on the morn in place o' thae ruined ones." And her black-alpaca arms extended to him a pair of rough tweed trousers in flamboyant checks of brown and buff.

It was not, however, the outrageous design of the offered garment, nor yet the amazing fact of its very existence, that caught Dick Sugden's breath in his throat.

"My lady?" he gasped. "My lady?"

The surgeon's skilful hands, flying about his ankle, stopped in their comfortable ministration like the hands of a man shot dead. His mouth was open, the glisten of his spectacles was full on Dick. The landlady's voice when she spoke was rigid with a curious unspoken threat.

"Your leddy," she repeated sternly. "Your lawful wedded leddy. That is, I hope she is such, for surely the Muckledean House has place for naught else!"

In the half-dozen seconds which followed this speech, Dick's mind worked even more swiftly than the frequent lightning-flashes which glared through the room. Before the icy glitter of those spectacles and the cold eyes beneath the frilled cap, he felt himself on trial; the Presbyterian Church, John Knox himself, against a pair of checked tweed trousers and a beribboned bandage!

Of course their view was the only natural one. What other opinion was possible for respectable people, to form of a young man and woman traveling *en auto*, and alighting together at a hotel? Confound the girl! But after all, to leave the impression uncontradicted, though a sufficiently disagreeable course to take, was as nothing beside the alternative which he saw shining in the hostess' unrelenting eye.

A gust of wind-filled rain rattled the shutters. Another crash of thunder reverberated among the hills. On such an evening to be turned adrift with contumely, to search for a new hotel, was too painful to be borne. Not for himself, to do Dick that much justice, was his thought that turned the scale, but for the girl who had bandaged his leg, and fed him with sandwiches. He answered his hostess' question in tones of an indignation as stern as her own.

"For what, madam, do you take us, on no better evidence than the natural surprise of an American at hearing the word *lady* used in such a sense? Unless you wish us to leave your house at once, I beg that you will no longer insult us with such suspicions!"

"Eh, sirs, but no offense was meant!" Mrs. Macnaughten, her virtue once appeased, was all suppleness and contrition. Since the leg was proved not the limb of a publican and sinner, but that of a moral pillar of society, the silent young surgeon resumed his task of bandaging. In relief unspeakable at the danger thus weathered, Dick drew a long breath.

With added apologies, the landlady withdrew. A few moments later the surgeon completed the dressing of the injured eye. Then he packed his in-

struments in his little shabby bag, pocketed his patient's handsome fee, and said good night.

For the next hour Dick was left free to the delightful employment of cogitating plausible explanations for the morrow, and rehearsing within his own soul the scene of his return to Chilham.

"Denner is coming up, sir! Will you walk into your drawing-room, or will you be served here?"

A smart, much-frizzled waitress stood in the door. As this was the first notification to Dick that he possessed such a luxury as a parlor, her remark necessitated an explanation. His bedroom smelled unpleasantly of arnica, and as he was eager to try the antiquated crutch which the surgeon had brought for him, he welcomed the suggestion of a change. So at the frizzled one's "Denner is served, sir!" which followed a few moments later, he rose with what agility he could manage and hobbled to the next room.

At the long low whistle which the sight of the little dinner-table under its shaded candles drew from him, the waitress turned in the ready sympathy which frizzled young persons usually stand ready to bestow upon handsome gentlemen. It was not, however, as she thought, the spasm of a wrenched muscle which moved him; it was, to tell the truth, his sudden perception of the surprising fact that the dinner-table was laid for two.

The servant-girl, however, seemed to accept this condition of things with calmness. After helping him to his chair, and placing a footstool for his injured foot, she crossed the little parlor to a door which directly faced his own.

"Denner is served, madam!"

Dick's heart stood still in a little shock of wonder which his resolution disowned. Would she open the door? Was he at last to see her face? Not of course that he had the slightest interest in the face of any woman in the world, save and except Daphne Medlycott's. But just the same there could be no harm in a little natural curiosity!

The maid knocked again, and repeated her announcement in a louder voice. The door flew open and a little gray-clad figure stood suddenly upon the threshold.

For a moment she stood still, staring straight before her at Dick. His first impression was of a pair of eyes—enormous eyes, bright and amazing like the sudden reflection of stars in a wayside pool. His second impression was that her astonishment in finding him here was fully as profound and as embarrassed as his own in finding her place set at his table.

Of the two it was Dick who, under the sharp eyes of the waitress, first recovered his self-possession. With a motion as near to a courteous bow as his crippled condition would allow, he saluted the newcomer.

"Good evening!" he said calmly. "Dinner is ready, as you see." Then to the waitress: "Place a chair for madam."

With a strong and obvious effort at self-control, the newcomer came forward into the room. And as the candle-light fell full on her, Dick saw that whatever might be his opinion of her escapade, he must own her a woman whom it was necessary to respect. It was not only the startling prettiness of the face now revealed to him, that moved him to this charity; nor was it the sharp and visible distress which lay over it like a shadow. It was the flexible softness of the mouth, the candid depths of the brown eyes, the quivering, transparent mobility of every facial muscle and every glance, which proclaimed this face to be that of a woman neither light nor hardened.

She sat at the table. The waitress served the soup. For the sake of appearances Dick uttered a few mechanical sentences in uncomprehended English, to which his companion replied in equally unintelligible French. Dick, confounding his own forgetfulness, ransacked his memory for scraps once fluent but now forgotten. How childish, how ridiculous for two grown persons to sit together in such a situation, without a single word to serve as me-

dium of communication between their two active brains!

Suddenly, as the two hands before him were raised to meet the waitress' platter of broiled fresh salmon, a detail struck on Dick's eye which needed no spoken word to interpret its meaning. About the ringless fingers of the girl's left hand were tied, bandage-wise, the tight concealing folds of a muslin handkerchief.

She caught his glance; and her deep blush testified, his meaning no less. Then with a strong affectation of unconcern, she returned to her fish. Her efforts to eat were, however, almost totally unavailing. The quick blood, ebbing from her face, left it white like the spotless napery of Mrs. Macnaughten. The distress in her shining eyes Dick saw to be not so much the shadow of grief as of a haunting, torturing fear. Was it of human peril, or of the roaring elements without? For at every clap of thunder she started, at every footstep on the stair her slight body drew itself together as though in the desperation of defense.

In spite of his vigorous resolution to enjoy his dinner at any cost, it was impossible for a kind heart like Dick Sugden's to witness unmoved the picture of such piercing and resolutely borne distress. His own wrongs and perplexities were doubtless flagrant enough. But he was a man, fitted to battle with them. Whereas this little thing opposite him— In the wave of pity that swept over him, in his sudden desire to mend and champion her wrongs, all his resentment against her vanished. Whatever had been her offenses toward him, he was willing to believe that she had not meant to wrong him. And certain it was, no wrong had been done that earnest good-will and fidelity could not some day hope to mend.

In the glowing reaction which comes of relief from physical pain and a comfortably filled stomach, Dick found his brain stimulated even to the remembrance of a few scraps of French. Yes, even though he would probably be unable to understand her reply, here were one or two words in which at least to

demand an explanation! The overinterested waitress had left the room, so the coast was clear.

"*Mademoiselle, pourquoi? Voulez-vous, pourquoi?*" Suddenly a blaze of lightning struck the room to whiteness, followed almost immediately by the roaring shock of the thunder. The girl before him took in her breath in a little sharp hiss heard even above the rattle which filled the house. For a moment, her tortured nerves seemed to escape from her own control. In a little shuddering gesture, as unconscious and appealing as that of a child, she leaned across the table toward Dick.

"*J'ai peur,*" she said, and laid her bandaged hand on his.

Her openly admitted terror, the helpless clinging of her touch, her prettiness, the mystery which clouded and surrounded her—in spite of his loyalty to another, these things could not be without their influence on Dick. He spoke to her with hearty kindness:

"Now, please, don't be afraid. This wet thunder never hurt a soul. Now, you really must cheer up. Don't be afraid, please!"

Still she remained rigid, her fingers closed like a helpless vise on his, her terrified eyes turned sideways toward the window. At the same time, Dick was aware of a new sound outside; the sharp hammerlike puff-puff-puff of an approaching motorcycle.

The girl sat motionless. All the force of her being seemed concentrated in her listening ears, in her fiercely watching eyes. In spite of his sympathy in her distress, Dick was conscious of a lively interest in what might be forthcoming. That all day the dread of pursuit had lain on her like a living terror had been obvious enough. Now at last, with the fulfilment of her fears was the mystery surrounding her to be lifted? And what would be exactly the part which he would be called upon to play in the possible scene, and what effect would it have in augmenting the difficulties in which he was already placed?

The motorcycle had stopped before the inn, and through their wide-open door they could hear plainly the sound

of voices in the hall below. The girl shivered as though in a north wind. "*J'ai peur*," she said again, in a low voice as though to herself. And mere sympathy in the helpless terror of this creature so much weaker than himself, drove all more selfish concern from Dick Sugden's head.

"It's nothing, don't be afraid!" he said again, in the soothing tone that one might use to a child. And with his free hand, he administered encouraging pats to the little icy fingers which clung convulsively to his. There was a little apologetic cough behind them. And the frizzled waitress, laden with coffee, came tiptoeing into the room.

In a sudden access of self-consciousness, which for the moment dominated even her terrified suspense, the girl snatched her hand away. As for Dick, he blushed quite unreasonably. The frizzled one, however, regarded them with an unconcealed and simpering glance of understanding, which at any other time would have made Dick writhe. At the present moment, however, he was listening to the new footsteps which, accompanied by Mrs. Macnaughten's creaking tread, were ascending the stairs.

Involuntarily he glanced at his companion. Her face was the color of her dress, and her breathing seemed almost to have stopped. What manner of man was this that they were about to see?

"This way, if you please!" Mrs. Macnaughten's high tones sounded outside their door. The next instant her black stuff outlines heaved in sight—passed on. Behind her there was the vision of a glistening black leather coat, a sharp white face, a pair of ratlike, searching eyes.

Dick heard a long sigh, the utterance of a heart not deep enough to hold its own relief. The next moment the newcomer had passed on.

All this excitement for nothing! In spite of his recent very genuine concern for his companion's sufferings, Dick could not but feel a pang of disappointment in the very undramatic dénouement to so thrilling a suspense. Though equally, perhaps, he might have con-

fessed to a certain disappointment had this vulgar little person in the chauffeur's cap and coat proved the man able to imprint the open mark of his power on the beautiful face across the table.

With a strong effort to appear unconcerned, she rose slowly to her feet. And replacing her empty coffee-cup in its place, she murmured hasty uncomprehended excuses to Dick. An instant later, the door of her bedroom closed behind her. Dick sat staring at the door. It was curious, how dim the room seemed, after the withdrawal of those shining eyes!

The maid heaved a little sentimental sigh.

"Eh, the *puir* leddy! She's fair weariet, one can see that. Thae motor-cars is awfu' wearyin' things."

Then as Dick, sipping his coffee, repulsed these conversational efforts by a stern silence, the arch person came nearer to the table. A side glance showed that she carried in her hands a large black-marbled book.

"She's French, your leddy, is she no?" the conversation went on undaunted.

Dick nodded gruffly.

The waitress giggled. "French, yes—I kenna as much. So when the mistress spoke to me just now, before this last body came in seekin' a room—she spoke to me, and she said: 'Tak' the book up-stairs to the leddy, Kate, and ask her to complete the entry.' I juist says to myself: 'No, it's not to the leddy I'll be takkin' it, for I caanna speak her language nae mair than a deid loon. I'll tak' it to the gentleman,' I says. So here it is, sir. Will you write in the name o' your city, here under *domicile*? You see, your gude leddy wrote nae mair than your bare names."

The blood mounted to Dick's head. Wrath, perplexity, amazement—all these boiled in his brain. For the last entry in the hotel register, written in fine and delicate characters of unmistakably Latin style, was as follows:

"Mr. and Mrs. H. Joliffe."

The girl presented him with a pen. "Juist the domicile, sir, if ye'll be so kind!"

But Dick, stupefied, continued to stare at that mute, incomprehensible entry. What the devil—— It was all very well that he, in ordinary gentlemanly decency, should allow the landlady's natural mistake to go unrebuked. But that at the very moment, the object of his chivalrous consideration should be taking so unwarrantable an advantage of him! He, already a married man or very near it!

His first impulse was a resolute denial. But who could say what horrors might be precipitated by a refusal to accept the situation? After all, and in spite of a few vagrant thoughts, he himself knew his perfect loyalty toward Daphne Medlycott. In spite of these disagreeable necessities thrust upon him by Fate, he must try to let the consciousness of his own inward innocence suffice for him, and for Daphne as well.

Accordingly, and with a rapid pen, he filled in the entry: "Chicago, U. S. A." A few inquiries concerning the possibilities of trains in the morning, remained to be made. Then, with directions that he be called early, he hobbled back to his bedroom.

His throbbing leg made undressing a slow and painful process. One slight incident, however, served to enliven it. As he flung his battered Prince Albert across the back of a chair, something small and bright fell ringing upon the floor.

With the point of his crutch he maneuvered it toward him, then painfully stooping, he picked it up and replaced it in his pocketbook. It was the plain gold ring which, with Tom Codrington's help, he had bought in Wick yesterday.

VI.

On the library sofa of the Chilham rectory, the Reverend Mr. Codrington lay sleeping. His hands were folded over his plump clerical waistcoat, and his little ugly face, though worn, was calm. On the floor beside him lay a telegram which had made possible this repose, the first since the night before last.

Bad accident; carried on to Carlisle; expect me this evening.
R. S.

In a relief too deep for words, Tom had despatched the contents of this message in a note to the Abbey; and had laid himself down for a little brief repose.

The past thirty hours had indeed been hard on one who had heretofore seen life run on with no more jolt or jar than a smooth if monotonous machine. In his sense of decency as well as in his affections, Tom's soul had been strained as never before in his life. Dick Sugden was the friend of his youth, Daphne Medlycott the idol of his secret dreams. But if to lose her was painful, to see her waiting vainly for a bridegroom who did not come, was more painful yet.

Had Tom devoured single-handed, indeed, all the dainties of the wasted wedding-breakfast, he could hardly be dreaming at this instant a nightmare more oppressive than the fiasco of yesterday. From that moment when, in obedience to the bustling Mrs. Medlycott's commands, he had returned to the company with the information that Sir Hamilton and Lady Bodley were expected at any moment, and the ceremony would accordingly be delayed, through the dreadful hours of waiting till Nash, despatched hastily to Wick with his ambling mare, had returned with the horrible news that no such gen'l'm'n as Mr. Sugden had been seen at the registrar's office that morning.

Just how the awful fact of Mr. Sugden's non-appearance leaked out, in spite of all efforts, from the chamber where the white-robed and impatient Daphne sat waiting, to the chattering, surmising, condoling drawing-room, Tom could not be sure.

By this time it was nearly three o'clock. The dowager countess, with misbelief of Tom's elaborate explanations shining from her eye, had long since departed in a huff. With an admirable presence of mind, the dean had taken off his surplice again and sat down alone at the dining-room table. The Medlycott and Bodley connection, who during the hours of waiting had

drifted about the drawing-room in helpless irritation, seemed to divine by instinct the meaning of Nash's solitary return. Tom Codrington's carefully framed tales of a sudden illness and a faulty license were passed over in polite indifference. The whole drawing-room seemed full of amazement and surmise and triumphant sympathy. Mrs. Medlycott, controlling her hysterics long enough to put a decent face on her good-bys and her apologies, found nothing but condolences in response.

The last carriage appeared and driven away again, Tom Codrington was finally admitted to the room where the deserted bride, still in her white lilacs and illusion, sat waiting. Now at last, there was no more necessity of pretense.

It amazed Tom indeed to find how readily a woman could believe the worst of a man to whom an hour ago she had been prepared to give her life. Daphne, of course, was perfect. And the blank disappearance of Dick Sugden at such a moment was inexplicable and agonizing enough. But still, in this world of chance and of accident, were there not other possible explanations of his vanishing, beside the vulgar commonplace of faithlessness?

"Wait till to-morrow—wait till we find something definite, wait till we know!" had been Tom Codrington's plea in the face of Mrs. Medlycott's hysterical laments and violent volubility of reproach. To the pale, enraged phantom in the wedding-dress, consolation had been more difficult to administer. Tom's perplexed heart bled for her humiliation, even while he urged upon her the charity of a deferred judgment. Suppose poor Dick was dead at this instant, he asked in final desperation, how would they feel to have dealt him so unsparing a condemnation?

Daphne's lip curled in icy contempt of this theory. Mrs. Medlycott went off into quite a series of screams. Dead, fiddlesticks! *Dead*, indeed!

This attitude of mind on the part of the injured bride, together with his own very serious alarms for his friend's safety, filled the unfortunate curate with

a distressed perplexity beyond any that he had ever known. Added to this, was the need of conducting the necessary search and inquiries, with the thoroughness which the occasion demanded, yet with a discretion which might so far as possible evade publicity.

The search, however, had been agonizingly futile. The authorities at Wick could give little aid, except a promise to communicate with all the county police at Westmoreland, and have a thorough search made for the missing gentleman.

The search of the Chillham woods and farm-lands occupied the afternoon.

Through the long twilight evening, then by torchlight, the work was continued. Every rod of Chillham woods and water was searched like a chamber. From time to time, Tom dashed back to the Abbey to report progress to the waiting bride and her mother. And after they had finally gone to bed, he still returned to find whether any news had come from the searching police.

It was a fagged and discouraged party who met after breakfast the next morning. By this time, the fact had become established that Richard Sugden, who yesterday was in existence, had now been wiped from the face of the earth. And despite Tom's protests, there was in the minds of the deserted Daphne and her mother no more doubt than yesterday, that this disappearance was an act of deliberate desertion.

The morning hours dragged on. With the arrival of lunch-time, however, there came a change.

The first event was nothing less than the long-heralded arrival of the lord of the manor. The way of his home-coming was as unimpressive as his appearance; a couple of hired flies brought him, his luggage and his party from the Liverpool train at Wick. A valet, a maid, a galaxy of trunks and hold-alls—an inflamed face, very peevish and puffy, followed by the glimpse of the wan, oppressed-looking little American wife; such was Tom's impression of the baronet's return. Despite the commonplaceness of the spectacle, however, and the load of care which lay on his own soul, Tom Codrington would have been

more than human had his heart not throbbed at the fleeting and nerveless clasp of the magnate's tremulous hand. For in that hand and no other lay the gift of the living of Chilham-cum-Wick—that living whose offices, since the death of the late vicar a few months ago, the little curate had been administering; and which now upon his return Sir Hamilton would bestow upon some lucky friend.

This was not the moment, however, for the creation of any agreeable, if irrational hopes. The Medlycott ladies, tearful and explanatory, were extending a welcome to their kinsman. The aged Nash and other retainers of the family were pushing forward for recognition. These attentions were met by the invalid with a bad temper so perfectly undisguised, and by his lady with a weary resignation that Tom could so well understand, that he left the Abbey to take care of itself and went off to his own pressing business of the moment. And sure enough, his return to his temporary home in the Chilham rectory, was rewarded by the discovery of Dick's message from Carlisle.

Seldom in his life indeed had Tom drawn breath of so stupendous a relief. What would those say now who had been so willing to take Dick's faithlessness for granted? Though in the note which Tom immediately sat down and wrote to Mrs. Medlycott, consideration for the adored Daphne prevented his triumph from appearing too openly. In a few words he communicated the glad news, and despatched his letter by the hand of the young country fellow that served him. Then having devoured a light and hasty lunch, he lay down at last for the repose that his exhausted system demanded.

He slept long, for he was very weary. Outdoors in the rose-garden of the vicarage, the afternoon shadows grew longer, and the hours crawled on toward afternoon tea—toward dinner-time. Still the curate slept undisturbed, his rosy little snub-nose upturned toward the oak-raftered ceiling. Suddenly his dreams were pierced and scattered by a clamor of voices.

"Mr. Codrington, sir—— Beggin' your pardon, Mr. Codrington."

"Tom, Tom, wake up, old man!"

Opening his dazed eyes, Tom Codrington might well be excused for doubting whether he had returned to wakefulness. For there before him, leaning on the arm of his young man Samuel, stood a singular phantom.

The phantom's face was very white, which gave a ghastly look to his swarthy skin. One eye was covered with a black patch. Above it, diagonally across the forehead, ran a strip of black adhesive plaster. Otherwise the newcomer's attire consisted of a motoring-cap, a crumpled Prince Albert coat of irreproachable cut, and a very tight pair of tweed trousers in thunder-and-lightning checks. Still more shocking than the trousers themselves, however, was the fact that one of the legs thus encased dangled helplessly; while its mate, with the aid of Samuel and of a rough walking-stick, advanced in painful dot-and-go-one hops.

Tom Codrington took in his breath. For once, the consciousness of ecclesiastical decorum dropped from him, and his whole soul was in his voice as he leaped to his feet.

"Dick!" he shouted. "By Jove, it's Dick!"

VII.

The evening was already well advanced before Dick Sugden had the chance to communicate his tale of woe to his host. A bath and change, a visit from the local surgeon, communication with Daphne through the kindly offices of Tom—these necessities were enough to fill in the time till dinner to the exclusion of all but the brief essentials of conversation.

If Dick had hoped perhaps that the evening might witness a sufficient lapse from the letter of decorum, to bring him a visit from his bride and her mother, his hopes were doomed to disappointment. The Medlycott messages, communicated through the medium of the curate, were kind but unenthusiastic. And the brief line in Daphne's handwri-

ting conveyed by the same ambassador, breathed the spirit of one who, though inclined to forgiveness, felt herself too ill-used to make that forgiveness immediate.

Dick sighed. Beyond a doubt, he had put the poor girl in a beastly awkward fix—how awkward he had hardly realized to the full till his return from the paths of wild adventure to the impregnably decorous ways of Chilham. If she chose to punish him it was no more than his due, and he would give his life to the task of making amends. Meanwhile, there was undoubted consolation in the excellent dinner which Tom's temporary tenancy insured from the vicarage cook, and from his own personal servant.

Dick's appetite was excellent, for the day had been a trying one. So that by the time the cheese and the walnuts had been despatched, and he with Samuel's assistance had hobbled back to the library for after-dinner refreshment, his tale was only half told. In a genial mood of relief he surveyed the wood-fire which in spite of the season burned upon the hearth, the tumbler of smoking whisky-and-water at his elbow, the good cigar that sent up its fragrance from his fingers. After all, when two men could be so comfortable together, why had women been formed to complicate this kindly calm into mere vexation and misery?

From these thoughts of disillusionment he was roused, however, by the voice of Tom's curiosity.

"Certainly, you may depend on me for absolute secrecy as you know, my dear chap. But how you expect it from the rest of the world is more than I can understand. The people that saw you, and probably recognized you, as your motor passed through Wick—what are you going to do about them?"

"Nobody saw me, that's just the point, don't you see?" returned Dick, in obvious relief. "My benefactress, when she picked me up, offered me a cap with goggles—naturally, I thought, because she objected to have her car made ridiculous by a party in a silk hat stuck up beside her. So naturally, I accepted her

kindness—very luckily, as it turned out! For disgusting as the whole affair is, I have at least the consolation that nobody recognized the recreant bridegroom making north with a veiled lady in an automobile. Pleasant situation for a chap that tries to do the decent thing where he can—eh, Tom?"

"A painful position—yes, I understand, though I must own— But of course, you were placed at a great disadvantage by being unable to communicate with her. But just the same, that Mr. and Mrs. Joliffe—that was a bit strong. Wasn't there anything you could do about it?"

Dick laughed grimly. "I could have got myself, and the little hussy herself, too, turned out on the bare hillside in the drenching thunder-storm. I could have raised a scandal which by to-morrow would be out in the *Daily Mail*. I tell you it was a damned awkward sort of situation; and for me to open my mouth could only have made the awkwardness absolutely irreparable. Heavens, man, can't you see that I couldn't afford to run the chance of an open scandal?"

Tom nodded with a sigh. "Yes, no doubt you're right. But still, in the morning—by the way, what did she say this morning?"

"This morning?" cried Dick. "This morning? Why, this morning, you see, is just where my story begins to grow interesting. For when I'd finished breakfast, and had had my leg bandaged, and was hobbling down-stairs to the rig I'd ordered to drive to the train—what should I find, but my lady had disappeared?"

"Well—that was a relief, anyway!"

Dick shrugged his shoulders. "Of course. And yet, I'll own that I'd have liked just one word of enlightenment—if it had been no more than a glimpse of the manner of man that carried her off."

The curate laughed uneasily. "Poor old Dick—you did get in for a whole sensation novel. So the angry father swooped down and took her home again?"

"Yes—that's the construction they put on the business at the inn. The land-

lady was most sympathetic. It was too late then to undeceive her—beside, I hadn't the time."

"Had to run for your train?"

"Better than that. I found, you see, that mademoiselle had left her machine behind her!"

"So you annexed it? My dear chap, wasn't that rather——"

"Of course it was—the whole business was! But there was the machine, at my service. You see, as the alarmed landlady explained to me, it was another motor that had come and carried her off. I'd heard the thing screeching outside when I was at my breakfast; but with this game leg I wasn't crossing any rooms to look out of any windows for idle curiosity. Jove, though, I can't help wondering what I should have seen if I had. It was somebody she had expected to follow her, evidently. For all day yesterday, she kept looking back along the road. And last night, as I told you, she nearly fainted for fright when that motorcycle arrived. But the next alarm was the real thing, evidently. Poor little child! She'd played me a bad trick, but I couldn't help feeling sorry for her just the same. However, she was gone—gone for good. And there was the car, ready at my disposal. What would you have done, my dear chap?"

The curate fussed uneasily on his chair. "My dear Dick—I own, it's difficult for me to imagine myself in such a position. However, I suppose I can guess what you did!"

"Exactly! Though to annex a six-thousand-dollar Maja car like a way-side buttercup—it was courting a certain risk. Beside, there was the difficulty of running it—it was a beautifully adjusted machine, or else that girl couldn't have sent it skimming along the way she did. However, for a battered-up wreck like me to try it without even a leg to work the brake—I was just going to give up the notion, when up rushed the landlady, who was very sympathetic in my attempts to pursue my lost one. It appeared, the motorcyclist who had arrived last night was a professional chauffeur on a trip, and

that he had volunteered to run my car for me!"

"Ah! So your troubles were at an end?"

"At an end?" Dick rose in his deep chair of padded leather, in emphatic repudiation of the notion. "At an end? Good Lord, man, when that confounded motorcycle was heaved up into the tonneau of that infernal white car, and I myself, crutch and all, was hoisted up to my seat beside that little white-faced bounder of a grinning cockney—I tell you, Tom Codrington, my troubles had only just begun!"

"Just begun? But my dear chap—what was there left to happen to you?"

"Listen, and you'll hear! At first, we ran along very smooth and sweetly. Mr. J. Trout—that was the little beggar's name—favored me with an account of a charming young 'Arriet to whom he was attached, and also with the tale of his own exploits in the Paris-Madrid race last year. But that was nothing. A bit later, when we were whizzing through a village where I saw a telegraph-office, I told him to stop so that I could send a message. And what do you suppose Mr. J. Trout informed me then? 'Alt!' he said. 'Alt right 'ere, sir. I may as well bryke it to you first as last, you're my prisoner!'"

At this horrible word, the curate bounced from his chair with a pallid face. "His prisoner. My dear Dick—you see, you shouldn't have taken the white car from the inn this morning, after all!"

Dick laughed grimly. "Yes, I saw that point for myself then, quite as plainly as you could see it for me. But even if I had driven off and left it behind me, that wouldn't have served me. It wasn't with taking the car this morning that I was charged—it was with stealing it from the garage of Prince's Hotel, Liverpool, early yesterday morning!"

Tom sank back helplessly into his chair. These waters, from which it was his professional duty to pluck the erring sinner, were too deep for him to enter at the side of a friend. But he managed to gasp:

"The motor was stolen? Dear me man, that—er—young person had *stolen* the motor in which she carried you off, and then left the robbery to be laid at your door?"

Dick nodded. "Yes—adding insult to injury, wasn't it? Though how a girl like that—well, I won't claim to judge where I don't understand. Though I admit, the case looked pretty black. This man Trout, it appeared, had been sent by the Maja agent in Liverpool, to give an early morning demonstration to a customer at the Prince's Hotel. When he arrived he was shown straight upstairs to this customer, who was represented as being rather in a hurry. Well, his worship had to learn patience! For when they came down-stairs, he and Trout, they found that the car had been taken from the garage. Trout, thinking to be only a moment, and trusting to the security of the hotel, had not troubled himself to remove the plug—careless little beggar! So they had the delight of finding that before the motor was cold, the car had been taken by a young lady who arrived with luggage and a hotel bell-boy—watching her chance, you see!—and who had seemed to know so very well what she was doing that no one even dreamed of interfering with her. So Trout, being responsible to the company, and not trusting very much to the acumen of the British police, promptly hopped on a motorcycle and set out on the trail."

The curate groaned. "My dear Dick! Think of you, mixed up with a gang of criminals—and with a sleuth on your track!"

Dick laughed impatiently. "Pshaw, you forget, you're talking with a member of the New York Stock Exchange—and as to the second half of the indictment, out there in Montana I've had the whole pack on my trail, often enough, not to be dismayed at the bark of a single hound. Though when I thought of Daphne, I'll own that the idea of the exposure, and the very scandal that I'd been trying to avoid, came near to making me pretty sick. But still, the very desperation of the case put me on my mettle! I said to my-

self: 'I was done up by a girl yesterday, but I'll be damned if I let myself be done up by this little cur of a cockney to-day!'

The curate stirred in some uneasiness at this violent language. Then he asked: "But, my dear Dick—with your leg in such a condition, what could you do?"

Dick brought his fist down on the table beside him with a thump that set the spoon rattling in his empty glass of grog.

"That's just it! Jove, man, I tell you, you haven't the remotest idea of one's infernal helplessness, with a leg that doubles up under one like an empty pair of trousers! And the idea of a grown man calling for help is a spectacle to wring tears from a woman-suffragist. Yes, there's no use trying to deny it—I was pretty well down and out. The grip of the law is an ugly thing to feel about your throat, Tom Codrington, when your bride is waiting for you, and there's a bad-looking mess with another woman to be kept dark at any price! If I'd had my gun with me, I'll own that it wouldn't have cost me much of a pang to get rid of Mr. Trout once for all—especially when the gasoline gave out, at a place just this side of Carlisle, and the little grinning brute took my crutch off under his arm when he went off to the oil-shop to hunt for more fluid!"

"Oh, I say— And you couldn't appeal to the police?"

"Me—a criminal caught in the possession of stolen goods! You forget, I was outside the law! So there I sat, stuck up in my car as helpless as the man with the marble legs—it was a piece of devilish ingenuity on the part of my jailer, you see, to hold me there by carrying off my crutch that the doctor had given me—and in a little sleepy place like that, there wasn't any one that I could get to help me, without making a noise that would alarm Trout as well. Oh, he knew what he was doing, there was no doubt of *that*. And it was the more aggravating, because the spot where I was planted was almost directly beside the railway-station.

And I had the pleasure of hearing the rails thrum, and of seeing the local for the south come puffing in and stop just across the road from me!"

"My dear Dick! And you couldn't

The American's jaw settled into lines of grim determination. "I couldn't, no—but I *did*! How I managed it I don't know, but when that train stopped there I knew I *had* to get on board of her. It was my only chance, I knew that! So I said to this leg of mine: 'You've got to hold me up!' How, I don't know—but I climbed down out of that motor, and walked across the road, and scrambled up into a third-class carriage. Just as the train was pulling out, I caught a glimpse of Trout, running down the platform after the train. It brought back the life that was pretty near leaving me, after the strain I had put on my will-power and these miserable wrecked muscles of mine. For I knew, you see, that he'd be wiring down the line to head me off.

"Exactly what I was going to do I didn't know—when by pure bull-luck, the train slowed down and backed up on a siding, to let the Great Northern fly by. So I called the guard, and tipped him, and gave him a story about my being due at a country-house nearby, and this junction being more convenient for me than the next station. He looked at me a bit suspiciously; that get-up of mine was not one to inspire confidence. By the way, Tom, tell Samuel he can relieve me of those wonderful tweed trousers, will you, please? But a half-sov. quieted his scruples, and he helped me out over the rails, and called a small boy who undertook to find a carriage for me.

"So I drove back again to Carlisle, in a covered fly—doubling my tracks, you see, like the wariest old criminal alive! My heart was in my mouth, I don't mind owning it, when we met that cursed white machine that was the beginning and end of all my troubles, flying down to the southward at the rate of fifty miles an hour. Just one glimpse I caught of Trout's little sharp face as he flew past—he didn't look happy, I

can tell you that! So I began to breathe easier; and when I got to Carlisle, I stopped to send that message that you got a while ago. Then I bought a stick, and took the train, and here I am.

"And to-morrow I face the music!"

VIII.

The music which Dick faced the next day was, as might be expected, of a rather slow and torturing variety. For if to forgive be one of the noblest exercises of the human mind, to be forgiven is a process much less exhilarating. Dick, however, was too fully conscious of the horrible humiliation to which through him poor Daphne had been exposed, to begrudge her the benignant satisfaction of receiving a sinner back into the fold. As for his pride, he recognized the present necessity of immolating that along with his love of truth-telling.

The story which he told, suppressing only the impossibly awkward features of the truth, was plausible enough. By merely adding unconsciousness to the list of injuries received in his desperate leap from the swaying post, and placing a gentleman beside the lady in the motor, he was able to present a perfectly neat and definite account of the accident which had carried him on to the hospital in Carlisle. So he was forgiven; and in his quality of invalid established on the sofa, and fanned, and read to. And not above once in every fifteen minutes did Daphne remind him of the agonies of mortification that she had endured when she found herself deserted before the whole county; or her mother recount to him the virtuous indignation of Sir Hamilton Bodley, at the insult thus offered to his beloved cousin Daphne by her delinquent bridegroom.

Dick writhed upon his sofa. It was no more than he deserved for the suffering that he had inflicted, but still it was hard to see himself brought for judgment to the bar of so notorious a reprobate as the celebrated Sir "Ham-mie" Bodley—the black sheep whose acquaintance he, in the plenary conscious-

ness of an unblemished record, had last year refused to make in New York. Well, his pride was brought low enough now. For Daphne's sake, he would have to swallow the censure and the forgiveness of her blackguard kinsman as well as of her justly offended mother and herself.

The awful presentation took place at tea-time. Sir Hamilton, it appeared, was in delicate health after his attack at Liverpool yesterday; and had beside been busy all day receiving the visits of his factor, his gamekeeper, his tenants, and other cares incidental to the return of the lord of the manor.

As Dick, in the leading-strings of the two ladies, meekly hobbled down the series of drawing-rooms and across the vast central hall, it seemed to him that no less than an army of new servants were hustling on every side of him. Early Victorian splendors were being released from their canvas coverings, Parian marbles dusted, and many miles of wool embroidery, done by former ladies of the house, given to view. Though the cause and centerpoint of all these preparations, when finally reached in the person of the master of the house, seemed in Dick's eyes hardly adequate.

Sir Hamilton, whom they found reclining in a large leather armchair in the little smoking-room beyond the north drawing-room, acknowledged the entrance and presentation with a languid bow.

"Delighted, I'm shaw," remarked the baronet. "Ain't I seen you before, Mr. Sugden—New York, or somewhere? Jove, I don't remember—meet such a doosed lot of people, travelin' about! Sit down, all of you. Have some whiskey, Mr. Sugden? No, by Jove, there's none here—I'm on the sick-list to-day, you see! Pidgin, since my lady isn't here, pour out some cups of this confounded tea for the ladies and Mr. Sugden."

Dick surveyed the renowned Sir Hamilton Bodley with some curiosity. To the eye he appeared a stout and bull-necked individual, whose white face was marked with the excesses of anywhere from twenty-five to fifty years. His

hands and lips were continually tremulous, though he tried to steady the one with the aid of the other. And above two heavily bagged sockets, his dull eyes looked out upon the world with an admirable vacuity.

If there were in the glance of those eyes, or in the deep lines which encircled them, any imprint whatever of spiritual workings or of life's experience, they were of a character which, as Dick perceived, the baronet's two dependent kinswomen were too innocent to read.

So they smiled at him, and drew him out in quite an artless pride in the civility of so illustrious a relative. Their one regret was the absence of Lady Bodley, who had gone out for a drive to the village. This personage had already been mentioned by Daphne with the enthusiastic affection which her rank as baronet's lady demanded, and by Mrs. Medlycott with a pleased anticipation of "forming" the little American, whom she had found unexpectedly meek and amenable to her influence.

Even with this regrettable absence, however, the conversation moved with more briskness than might have been expected. Sir Hamilton, in spite of his shaky condition, was very dignified on the subject of yesterday.

"So you came near to jiltin' my cousin Daph, yesterday," he remarked, with graceful banter. "Bad thing that—I always say, if a chap can't behave himself the week he's gettin' married, then he'd best stay single. Though I remember, when I was mashin' Vera —" The moralist paused. A leering twinkle in the puffy eyes caused Dick a moment's unpleasant apprehension lest the Medlycott ladies were to be favored with the rest of this reminiscence. But a new subject, happily, suggested itself. "If you'd had your own car, Mr. Sugden," he went on solemnly, "it's perfectly plain that none of this row could have happened. Carried on to a hospital in another chap's machine—No, own your own car! I've got my machine, comin' up from Liverpool to-day or to-morrow. We'd have traveled in it, but I was too ill. Though, damn the machines, I hate 'em, and I don't

mind sayin' so. Pidgin, have you brought that whisky yet?"

Pidgin, a grave and responsible individual who had been with Sir Hamilton since boyhood, and followed him on his disreputable career around the civilized globe, brought a siphon of soda with a murmured apology about "doctor's orders." At this the invalid's displeasure became so exceedingly unpleasant to see, that his two lady visitors rose in fluttering apprehension.

"Good evening, Hamilton!"

"Good evening, my dear boy, take care of your precious health."

"Thanks—don't worry, Aunt Moll," retorted the invalid, with the semblance of a returning grin. Then as Dick, with the aid of his crutch, started to hoist himself upright, his host put out a detaining hand.

"No—you stay a moment," he said, with a yawn in the direction of the two retreating ladies. "By Jove, I've been so nervous all day with all this harem whimperin' over me, I feel as if I'd give a pound a minute for a little masculine society. Sit down, there's a good chap, do. You'll get all you want of Daph, soon enough—take a married man's word for that!"

In spite of some indignation at this unchivalrous mention of his bride, Dick could not repress a smile at the remembrance that this was the voice of the spiritual authority to whom he had been directed for final judgment. Accordingly, he sat down. His host, having poured and greedily drunk a glass of soda from the siphon at his side, condescended to favor him with further confidences.

"Though of course, you'll never take my advice—I wouldn't take advice when I stood in your shoes, myself. Young chaps never will! Nor old chaps, either. But take my word for it, women are the doose. No, not *women*"—a sudden knowing twinkle, unspeakably repulsive to Dick, came into the vacuous eyes—"but woman—the woman; the one that gets the legal grip on you, and then holds on like grim death. That's what marriage is, my boy! Yes, Sugden, though my Aunt Moll wouldn't

thank me for it, you can take the word of an old stager that's seen life from A to Z, and from Paris to Bombay: marriage is the devil itself. By the way, why doesn't Pidgin bring that whisky?"

He reached out a bony hand, trembling in its wadded silk sleeve, toward the hand-bell at his side. Then, licking his lips and glancing suddenly sideways, he seemed to change his mind. "Mr. Sugden," he asked abruptly, "lend us your flask a minute, will you?"

Dick shook his head. Even to one who had not observed his kind in Montana mining-camps and on Broadway, the condition of the unhappy creature before him was plain enough.

It was, however, with perfect truth that he replied: "I'm sorry—I only carry it when I'm traveling. Won't your man bring you some?"

The baronet glanced sideways as if to read what was in Dick's mind. He made a final attempt to recover his dignity, then burst out in desperation:

"No, he won't, and you know he won't! They're all in a conspiracy to kill me, I think—Pidgin, and my lady, and that confounded ass of a doctor. Just because I had a little touch of the old complaint at Liverpool, day before yesterday and again last night. I don't mind ownin', I had been havin' the doose of a good time on the voyage over. And just a degree or two of fever—what does that matter? If it had been like that attack I had at 'Frisco, now, when my heart went back on me and the crocodiles were crawlin' up on the bed—up over the counterpane, I give you my honor! But this—this ain't anythin'. All I need is a spoonful of whisky, to steady my nerves. You haven't got any on, you tell me? And you call yourself an American!"

He broke into a peal of unsteady laughter. Dick rose with slow awkwardness to his feet. This was not the first time in his life that such a request had been made of him; and though in this case the victim's rank, and his position as lord of the historic splendors around them, might add a certain pathetic picturesqueness to the situation it could do little to make it more savory.

"I think," said Dick, "that Daphne and your aunt will be expecting me now. Good evening, I hope you'll be better to-morrow!" And he held out his hand.

To his amazement, it was seized in a hot and bony vise that nearly pulled him from his unsteady feet. A pair of red-rimmed eyes were raised in furious beseeching to his.

"But I've got to have it, I tell you!" cried Sir Hamilton Bodley. "Just a spoonful, to pull me together till I begin to get my strength back—to help me stand up and meet all these confounded family friends that'll be pilin' in to call on me in a day or two. Look—they've been sendin' me their cards already—from the lord lieutenant of the county down!" And with his free hand, he tremulously turned over a pile of pasteboards on the table beside him. "That's what it means to me, don't you see, Sugden?" he begged piteously. "It's the honor of the name—I'm Bodley, of Chilham! There's no better name in England—hasn't Aunt Moll told you, the governor refused a peerage? I know I've been wild, and that. But now I've come home, and goin' to stand for the county, and give a good example, and stand in well with my own class—the class I was born to. Hang it, Sugden, you ain't a born aristocrat and you don't understand. But I'm a proud man, and I can't bear to think of those Westmoreland fellows lookin' me up and down, and titterin' under their breath when my hand shakes. I've got to have somethin' to stop the shakin', and they won't give it to me. It's downright cruel, I tell you! So run and fetch me your flask—quarter-full will do!—who's that? Hang me if it ain't that damned little parson! Good evenin', Tom! Come to look after my soul?"

Tom's errand was, however, to fetch Dick.

So they went off together to drink afternoon tea with the Medlycott ladies. After the scene at which he had just assisted, even the reproachful platitudes of his future mother-in-law seemed salutary and grateful to Dick.

As for Daphne, she was all that was charming. Though she was never electric, she could be exceedingly sweet. And her sweetness was as balm to the bruised and humiliated spirit of her betrothed. Gratefully he accepted her forgiving kindness, and the arrangement by which the wedding was finally set for the following Tuesday.

Then, as Daphne, in obedience to her mama's directions, sat down to write the news of this new arrangement to her uncle the dean—"My dear Dick," cried Mrs. Medlycott in sudden concern, "whatever is the matter with you?"

For Dick, with his eyes on the mother-of-pearl blotting-book in Daphne's hand, had started in a sudden and very obvious dismay. The next moment, however, he had recovered himself.

"This confounded leg of mine, it catches me on the raw every now and then," he explained. Then, turning to Mrs. Medlycott: "Tuesday, you say? It seems a long way off, but I suppose it's our first chance; and by that time I'll have my own car, as Sir Hamilton advises, so we'll run no risks. You agree to Tuesday, Daphne, my dear?"

His dear Daphne nodded with a smile. She was busy with her letters, and it was growing to be high time for the gentlemen to take their leave. Accordingly, they rose. And as Dick bent over his future bride in tender, if unenthusiastic farewell, she was amazed at the sudden question:

"By the way, Daphne—would you mind telling me who it's from, that note in the blue envelope with the blue embossed cipher? Here—this one!"

He stooped toward her portfolio. But something in the abruptness of his tone, in the impatient masterfulness of his gesture, irritated the girl with whom his position was as yet more or less one of sufferance. She calmly shut the mother-of-pearl cover beneath his hand.

"You forget, Master Dick—you are not my husband yet!" she observed with dignity. "And even when you are, I hope that you will respect my private correspondence as I intend to respect yours!"

Then, as Dick, realizing his mistake,

made his explanations and apologies, she relaxed to her former sweetness.

"No offense, my dear Dick—but you see, this is the time for setting a good precedent! And now, good evening, my dear boy. Take good care of yourself, and mind you come early to-morrow morning!"

At the door of the west wing, Nash's venerable mare, with the ancient basket-cart, was waiting to take the cripple home to the rectory.

As Tom had to visit an old woman in one of the tenant's cottages beyond the fields, it was arranged that Dick should drive himself home. Samuel at the rectory would help him to alight, and bring the rig back to the Abbey again.

Daphne's forgiveness and consent to the wedding on Tuesday, while undoubtedly sweet to him for their own sake, were chiefly valuable as the mark and sign that his self-respect was once again restored to him. For the first time in his life, his pride in his own upright and honorable self had been taken from him; and now that it was his again, he fairly luxuriated, rioted in the relief of its restoration.

To be sure, there was always the slight incident which a few moments ago had struck upon him. A qualm came over him at the thought, then he pushed the foreboding, together with its attendant recollections, resolutely from him. Pshaw, a coincidence—what was that, to worry a man secure in his own peace and his own surroundings? The flying white car, the storm-bound inn, the beautiful, listening face so near his own—they belonged to the wild life that lay outside this snug security of Chillingham; never again could they return to trouble his peace!

Slowly the old nag ambled down the winding carriage-road. Ahead of Dick on the driveway, a sudden turn disclosed a solitary figure walking. Dick, absorbed in his own thoughts, had no consideration to bestow on a stray tradesman returning from a visit at the Abbey. Slowly the ambling mare overtook the wayfarer. Just by the wheel he turned; and disclosed to Dick a well-

remembered coat of black leather, a white face, and a pair of ratlike searching eyes.

The next moment, with an agile spring, the stranger had hooked himself to the little rear seat of the low-hung cart. "'Ow's yourself, Mr. Jolliffe?" he asked, with indescribable impudence.

Dick wet his lips, then controlled himself to speak. "How did you find me, Mr. Trout?" he asked sternly.

IX.

J. Trout was small and twinkling in appearance, and not to be distinguished for cheerful vulgarity from any other cockney chauffeur. His words, however, carried with them the weight of Nemesis for the unhappy man whom he had thus successfully run to earth.

"How did you find me, Trout?" Dick repeated his question sternly.

The little chauffeur grinned at him. "Toffs in Prince Halberts and tweeds yn't so blarsted marny, in this part of the kingdom nor any other, that a chap with 'arf an eye can't tryce 'em, easy enough. That was a dinky trick you pleyed off on me, with the lyme leg as you couldn't walk on, not a bloomin' step, till I left you alone! Yes, you pleyed it on me, good and proper. 'Ow-ever, love will find the way. So 'ere I am. Glad to see me, sir?"

Dick's brain worked rapidly. The man's purpose in following him was, of course, plain enough. Equally plain was the uselessness, in the present situation, of any attempt to resist him. The one clamorous necessity was to shake off this phantom which had stepped from one side of his life into the other, to the threatened destruction of all those solid, healthful decencies which made up the existence known as Richard Sugden's. In spite of his innocence, Dick knew what it was at this moment to carry the burden of a double life; for in case that the news of the one existence filtered through into the region of the other, who would credit the wild tale which vouched for his blamelessness? No, at all costs, at all

hazards, the resurrection of this second life must be averted; the more resolutely perhaps because, in the depths of his soul, he realized the strange allurements which this wild remembrance of adventure held for him.

"How much do you want, Trout?" he asked quickly. For his quaint equipage was just passing out through the ancient gate of Chilham park, and before them on the right waited the rose-bowered vicarage and the young man Samuel at the door. "What's your price, my man?" asked Dick sternly.

The little cockney smiled in gratified appreciation of this businesslike approach; and with equal promptness he rewarded it. "Sir, I've plyed you fair and square. When I brought back that cyar to Liverpool yesterday, I kep' my mouth closed like a Sunday pub an' unless I hopen it, you're as safe as King Hedward 'imself. Now to a g'n'tm'n like yourself, yn't that worth—ten quid?"

Dick pulled out his purse, opened it, and extracted five gold sovereigns. "I'll pay you half," he said briefly. "Here you are, Trout!"

Trout seized the cash, grumbling. "I wouldn't 'a' thought that Chicago would 'a' cut down on a reasonable offer like wot I nymed. 'Owever——"

Dick pulled up the willing mare. The rustic Samuel, grinning, and attired in the famous tweed trousers, stood at the vine-bowered gate of the vicarage. Dick turned to his companion. "It's straight down the road," he said, "to the station at Wick. The southbound passes at seven-thirty-five. Good day, my man. Here, Samuel!"

The curate's young servant bustled forward with an alacrity born of large and frequent gratuities. "Law bless us, zur, don't 'ee go quick. I never zeed, we'll be needin' a cheer for gittin' 'ee down from that heikth. 'Old 'ard a minute, Mr. Sugden, zur!" And the obliging youth turned back to the vicarage on a run.

A leather-gloved hand seized Dick's arm in a sudden vise. A little white face was pushed up into his own, a sharp voice hissed in his ear. "Mr.

Sugden! Mr. Sugden! So *that's* 'oo you are, Mr. Joliffe of Chicago! And I was a-goin' to let you hoff for a stingy five quid!"

The mere sound of his own name on this man's lips held for Dick an immediate and indescribable menace; still more the vague threat which the words implied. He turned, however, a bold front upon his tormentor. "Yes," he replied calmly, "my name is Sugden—Sugden, of New York. Have you any objections, Mr. Trout?"

By the triumphant delight which twinkled from the eyes of the gentleman addressed, and which twisted up his little white face into one knot of malicious ecstasy, it would seem that he had no objections at all. "Blast my eyes, w'y couldn't I 'a' put two an' two together for myself! Of course! The Mer'kin gen'l'm'n, Mr. Sugden to wit, that every one was talkin' of down there at the Bodley Harms where I ate my lunch. Run off an' left his bride, d'y of the weddin'. Come sneakin' back with a 'broken 'ead, nobody knowed from where. But I know. Gawd, yn't it comick! I know! What'd she s'y, sir, the future Mrs. Sugden, and the baronight her cousin, if they 'ad noos of the fair Mrs. Joliffe up there in the north?"

Dick was silent. He had known of course the aspect which his adventure must inevitably wear in the eyes of every grown-up person before whom the facts should come. But until he had heard them thus boldly and vulgarly stated, he had hardly realized their crudely damning quality.

Trout's voice, full of an indescribable significance, was in his ears:

"Though Gawd bless you, sir, I'm not blymin' you—I'm not a bloomin' curick! Now by what I 'ear at Wick of your future lydy, sir, she's the frozen-hangel style—peaches and cream, an' that. W'ereas this hother little devil, *she's* more like shempyne. Just a glimpse of her eyes I caught that night—and damme, sir, a man's a man, and w'en eyes like that 'says 'come on, w'y—— Don't 'it me, sir, I s'y, don't 'it me!"

Dick's hands, forgetful of the crippled impotence behind them, were on the little cockney's throat. A voice sounded suddenly behind him:

"The cheer, zur! Ain't 'ee zeed the cheer, Mr. Sugden, zur?"

In sudden recollection, Dick dropped his hands from the chauffeur's leathern collar, and turned to meet the mild, inquiring eyes of the curate's young man.

"Thank you, Samuel! You may leave it there for the present—I find, I must go immediately back to the Abbey." Dick's hands, still tense with the ferocity of indignation which an instant ago had animated them, gathered up the reins over the old mare's back.

"Sit there, you little foul-mouthed cur!" he commanded the glowering cockney beside him. "We are going back to the Abbey, where, after I have spoken with Miss Medlycott and her mother, you may tell them your story as freely as you wish. Afterward, I will drive you to Wick and give you in charge for blackmail and extortion. And if you try to move, by God I'll knock your head off! Do you understand me now?"

"Ho-ho!" laughed Trout in a thin falsetto of scorn. "Ho-ho!" His little pallid face was suddenly stretched upward toward Dick's, his keen eyes blazed an impudent defiance. "Yes, go and tell your lydy you went to an 'otel with the other one as 'usband and wife—tell her as 'ow the 'otel was in Scotland. And then see 'ow much of a bloomin' weddin' there'll be on Toosday—bigamist!"

There are some words, some moments at which life breaks distinctly into two halves as does the symphony when it falls from the golden violins to the somber, throbbing brass. After the instant's vertigo produced by the revelation of Trout's words, by the sting of his sudden hideous epithet, Richard Sugden saw plainly that the period of peaceful joys, of trifling vexations easily met and easily vanquished, was at an end for him. If there were in this man's words any truth whatever, before him lay in horrible possibility the tragical shadow of disgrace.

In stony resolution, he forced his lips to a contemptuous answer.

"Trout, you forget yourself!"

"Forget myself, do I?" snarled the little chauffeur, rubbing his neck with a tender hand. "No, sir, I don't forget myself, nor yet I don't forget the hentry I read in that 'otel register—name written in by the lydy, domicile haddid by the gen'l'm'n—both of 'em writin' of it, by common consent! Nor yet I don't forget wot that 'andsome chymbermyde tole me, about the bride an' groom that 'ad the first floor front, and 'ow bashful they was when she caught 'em 'oldin' of each other's 'ands! Nor yet am I forgettin' of what I 'eard the landlydy 'erself tellin' to the boots, of 'ow the gen'l'm'n with the game leg was so bloomin' indignant at 'er and the saw-bones, because they 'ad seemed to hint 'is lydy was anythink less than his lawful wedded wife. Oh, yes, sir, you tied yourself up to her as tight as could be wished—not knowin' of course that you 'ad passed the line, or else as bloomin' hignorant of the Scotch law as I am of Chicago!"

As he listened to this diatribe, blunder upon blunder raked up from the unforgotten secret past and piled together in one complete and damning whole, Dick's throat seemed suddenly to close upon his breath. Yes, not a detail of the facts thus marshaled by the little grinning wretch before him but was true. But was it also true, was it possibly true that beside these isolated and harmless facts there coexisted this vital legal principle claimed by Trout, to forge of these facts an indissoluble and fatal bond to ruin his life?

From the forgotten past, from stray dramas and such romance reading as a busy and active life had allowed, there crowded upon him sundry recollections of Gretna Green, of broomstick weddings, of the fatal knot which tied persons who merely in play, perhaps, had claimed each other as husband and wife. It was strange, he had not remembered in time; it was odd, he had not noticed the new dialect in the mouth of his hostess of Muckledean, and considered the fatal consequences it might imply in

that uncontested entry of the names—"Mr. and Mrs. H. Joliffe, Chicago!" The ineffaceable line danced hideously before his eyes. Yes, it seemed everything that Trout said was true. Unless—unless—

No, it was impossible that the civilized kingdom of Scotland, in this present twentieth century, should conserve, for the further entanglement of bewildering modern life, any so barbaric and medieval a law! He turned back to Trout with a sudden sternness.

"This new complication," he said calmly, "puts, as you seem to understand, a new face upon the affair. As an American, I am entirely ignorant of the points which you bring up. But in order to prevent the danger of any such error as you name, it becomes necessary for me to find out at once: First, whether Muckledean really is in Scotland, secondly whether the old marriage law has actual binding force at the present day. So with your permission, I'll turn this horse immediately around. I suppose I'll be able to find a lawyer in Wick?"

"If you do, sir," retorted Trout sulkily, "you'll find 'is bloomin' hoffice shut up tight. W'y can't you tyke my word for what I say?"

Dick laid a sudden lash across the back of the lazily ambling steed. "Go on there!" he said savagely. "If the lawyer's office is closed then we rout him up from his very dinner-table. As for you, Trout, you go and wait at the inn till I find from the lawyer exactly where I stand. If what you say is true, then not a penny of blood-money do you get—the marriage on Tuesday is off, do you understand? But if you have lied, it is possible I may find it worth while to buy your silence. In any case you gain nothing, and lose an excellent chance, if you refuse to wait for a day or two, till I have decided what I am to do. Come, you little blackguard—is it a bargain?"

"It's a go, right enough—I yn't a-goin' to split, till I know for certain there yn't nothin' comin' to me for 'old-in' my jaw!" returned the cockney, with a very obvious reasonableness. And the

fat mare, in dignified amazement at the unaccustomed speed demanded of her, galloped clumsily down the green-bordered highroad on the way to Wick.

X.

Those hours in which the defendant in a capital case awaits the return of the jury are said to be uncommonly trying. Almost equally unpleasant, perhaps, are those days in which a gentleman on the eve of marriage with a highly connected and charming young lady waits to find out whether or no he is already the husband of Jane Doe unknown.

With this cheerful possibility still hanging over him, Dick sat down on noon of Saturday to the pleasant lunch-table of the rectory.

The evening before last, immediately after his interview with Trout, he had sought Mr. Winterfield, the lawyer of Wick, and man of business for half the county families around. This gentleman, however, being only a solicitor, had declined to answer the complicated question on the mazes of Scotch law, propounded him by his distracted client. The utmost that the prayers and the lavish fees of the latter could induce, was a promised visit by Mr. Winterfield's clerk, to Carlisle on the following day. There at that moment the Assize Court for the county was sitting, with a full complement of London barristers. One of these barristers, Sir Wickham Flynt, was a well-known authority on the law of the northern kingdom. It was just barely possible, in consideration of the urgency of the case, and of the very large fee offered by Mr. Sugden, that in a day or two he might hope to hear—In short, a full statement of the painful and complicated case had been prepared for submission to the great man; and at any moment now, the legal opinion which was to settle Dick Sugden's fate might arrive from Carlisle.

In his present state of twitching impatience, he was able to hear but little of the curate's conversation; which was, to tell the truth, chiefly about himself and his own affairs. His chances of

being appointed to the living of Chilham-cum-Wick, whose offices for the past year he had fulfilled—such formed the burden of his thoughts and his conversation. The long absence of Sir Hamilton from his native land, his exceedingly small list of respectable friends, made it possible—barely possible—that Tom, in spite of his obscurity, might be the favored candidate.

Lady Bodley, who was disposed to be very serious, and to take a deep interest in parish affairs, had promised him her influence. Sir Hamilton himself had hinted—in short, there was an excellent chance that Tom Codrington, who seemingly had been doomed to the lot of perpetual curate, might at any day now step into the life-enjoyment of this delightful rectory, and of seven hundred pounds per annum, clear of all encumbrances. No wonder that, under the circumstances, he had but scant attention to pay to the rather sordid distresses of his guest. He tried, however, to be as sympathetic as possible.

"Yes, my dear Dick, very painful, very painful indeed. And for poor Daphne—well, what will she feel, poor girl, at such a mortification? For the second time, too! I know, she has felt it keenly. In fact, she was saying to Lady Bodley, only to-day—for you know, she and Lady Bodley have taken the greatest fancy to each other, and——"

"Hark!" said Dick suddenly. Then, leaning forward with straining ears, "Didn't I hear the knocker of the side door?" he asked feverishly.

"Very possibly. Lady Bodley promised to have some asparagus and strawberries sent down from the kitchen-garden of the Abbey. In fact, she has shown me the very greatest attention, so I am inclined to hope——"

At that moment Samuel, tray in hand, entered the room.

"Boy from Mr. Winterfield's, zur, come and guv this in for Mr. Sugden, zur!"

Like the cast of a fly, Dick's brown hand shot across the table toward the long, official-looking envelope that reposed upon the silver plate.

"By your leave, Tom," he muttered breathlessly, as his unsteady hands tore the missive open.

The little curate, rolling his own private affairs over and over in his mind, wondered at his guest's mounting excitement as he read, at the black and impotent despair of his look.

"What's the news, Dick?" he finally ventured to ask.

"My dear Tom," said Dick, speaking with great nicety and deliberation, "I wish you would have the goodness to look over this communication and inform me what, in your opinion, is the thing to be done."

Curiosity, no less than friendship, gave wings to Tom's eager hands and eyes. Bending over the table, he gave himself up to the breathless perusal of those crabbedly written sheets. And as he read, his amazement and his perplexity grew.

"What's this? Upon my word! Um, um—as inscribed in the register of the Muckledean House, Muckledean-on-Esk, County of Dumfries, N. B.' Ah, I understand—this concerns the late unfortunate affair. But Scotland—you never told me, your adventure carried you up to *Scotland!*"

Dick took in his breath. His handsome face was very pale and his eyes were full of a grim despair. But he was his own man once more as he replied:

"How could I have told you, when I didn't know it myself? There was no one out to say 'Hoot, mon' when we passed the line! And anyway if—I had known, what difference could it have made?"

The curate surveyed him with a curious expression in his little ugly face. "Why, really, of course. But then I suppose that you as an American have never heard of those curious old laws that they keep up there—just to remind people that they once *were* a separate kingdom! Though I thought with the late flood of Kailyard literature, that everybody knew!"

"Knew what?" demanded Dick quickly.

"Why, that in Scotland it isn't safe

to go around representing yourself as husband and wife unless you want—er—to stay so. I thought at the time that you were a bit reckless, but then I never supposed for a moment that you had gone beyond Northumberland!"

Dick surveyed the curate with a grim smile. "Of course, you know all about it now that it's too late—just like me! But read on—read on!"

The Reverend Tom obeyed him eagerly. "Jove! It begins to look serious. 'Two persons thus representing themselves as a lawfully wedded pair, in the presence of witnesses—landlady, chambermaid, etc., of hotel at Muckledean—dining together—occupying the same'—ahem!"

"For the facts of the case," interposed Dick in stern indignation, "you have had my own account of the proceeding, in every detail! Go on, look at his cases that he bases his infernal opinion on—here, farther down on the next page!"

Tom cracked the parchment obediently. "'Bean against Bean—an exactly parallel case, the Honorable Alexander Bean contesting the validity of marriage, by declaration, with Molly Bean. Marriage sustained by Court of Session, Edinburgh——' Jove! Dick, this is no joke."

"Did you hear me say it was?" retorted the victim grimly, and Tom read on:

"'Case of MacWhirter against Gomez. As one of the parties was a forger, it was represented that he must be followed by the law of his domicile. Exception not allowed. Petition on the part of MacWhirter, father of Mrs. Gomez, for annulment of marriage, therefore set aside.' Ah! And I say! Here are a lot more! 'Appeal to the House of Lords in the case of a disputed will involving a half-million pounds. Judgment of lower court confirmed, which declared lawful a previous marriage of this sort by testator when a young man in Scotland—children by later marriage with Lady Sarah F—— therefore illegitimate.' No—I say, illegitimate, that's bad!"

"Very bad." Dick nodded his head. "Now, look at his summing up—down

there, where the old codger gives his opinion."

Tom hesitated, started. Then in his best pulpit voice he read the following:

"Therefore, in view of cases cited above, and assuming the facts of the case to be fully and correctly given, it is the opinion of your counsel that the proceedings in question constitute a valid marriage. I have the honor to remain, sir, your obedient servant, Wickham Flynt.'" Tom read to the end, his voice dropping mechanically to the final word. Then, raising a little scared face from which all the chubby pinkness had ebbed away:

"And Dick—Tuesday?"

XI.

"The worst," says the Scotch proverb, "may be thoed when it's kened." And to Dick Sugden, as he sat down at Mrs. Medlycott's dinner-table, even his present certainty of despair seemed more tolerable than the racking doubts of the past few days.

This dinner of ceremony, in which his future mother-in-law blazoned to a doubting world the triumphant fact of the prodigal's return—this immediate necessity of a gay unconsciousness brought with it, at least, the same comforting certainty of the course to be pursued. To tell Daphne to-night, to cloud with defeat this little fleeting triumph of hers, appeared to Dick quite impossible. What must come to-morrow, must come. But to-night at least, he would protect the woman he was pledged to cherish, from the blow which already through his fault had fallen on her unconscious head.

Not only by consideration for the unfortunate bride herself, but by a faint, ineradicable, unreasonable hope was Dick influenced in his decision to keep silent until to-morrow. For something had happened, possibly slight, possibly stored with significance. Sir Hamilton Bodley who, having refused to attend his aunt's dinner, was disposed to make some amends of politeness, had condescended to call at the rectory for her guests. This condescension was the

more marked and striking, because the baronet came in his new car. His car? Dick, limping out of the rustic gate of the rectory, had rubbed his eyes and stared in amazement.

Yes, the same—the very same!

There before him was the identical Maja flier which, no less than Nemesis herself, seemed to Dick the very root and symbol of his present ruin—the same car, white and glistening, which had stolen him and which he himself had stolen; the car which had pursued him, which he had escaped, and which again had now returned to flaunt its fatal beauty in his face. And in the driver's seat, dressed in a smart new livery and with his ratlike eyes fixed demurely on the shining bonnet of the car, had sat no other than J. Trout.

Trout! Yes, it was Trout!

The first shock of his amazement over, Dick had tried to force his mind to the compassing of this baffling development. After all, it was no marvelous coincidence that the Maja people, in their sale of a car to this purchaser of to-day, should have chanced to send to Sir Hamilton this particular machine of which recently they had so nearly been despoiled. Nor was it so remarkable that in choosing a chauffeur for their new customer, they should have recommended this man who, so far as they had understood, had given such valuable service to them and to the machine.

At the moment, Dick had been of course cut off by the presence of Sir Hamilton Bodley from any communication with this mysterious and torturing apparition—with this little cockney who formed the one animate link through whom Dick might hope to find the woman to whom, by the law of the land, he was so fatally bound. Trout, and Trout alone, could give him the information which he so sorely needed. Who knows? Perhaps at this very moment the little Parisienne who was Dick Sugden's wife, might be lurking in the neighborhood, carried here on the same errand, perhaps in the same conveyance with her accomplice.

The thought burned in his blood with

a mounting and desperate excitement. Yet pressing as was his need, he could not satisfy it then. The dinner lay before him—Trout must wait. Through hours of enforced merriment which ground his very soul with impatience, Dick sat at the dinner-table, and listened to the dean's jokes, and the platitudes of the dowager countess, and admired in a sort of woful sadness the fair looks of Daphne herself.

Would the end never come? Would the possibility of escape never, never come? By the time that the dinner had worn to an end, and the gentlemen had finally joined the waiting ladies in the drawing-room, it seemed to Dick that his hair must be gray with the racking intensity of his suspense.

"Must you go so early, my dear Dick?" asked Daphne with calm affection.

Partly in a desperate reach toward the truth, however disastrous, partly in the same self-torturing whim which led Mary Stuart at Fotheringay to test with her finger the edge of the ax, Dick replied:

"Yes, I must be off—my head isn't quite right yet, you know. What would you say, dear Daphne, if after all we couldn't be married next Tuesday?"

They were standing in the embrasure of a curtained window. The indulgent consideration which, in Anglo-Saxon countries, is given always to affianced lovers, had for the moment distracted the attention of the company from them. This was lucky. For otherwise the sudden withering of Daphne's rosy tints, the sudden rigidity which pinched lip and nostril into a very mask of disaster, must have attracted general and calamitous attention. But her face was turned from all but the unhappy man whose words had so blanched its beauty, and her answer was no more than a whisper:

"Dick! Then it's true? You've been deceiving me all along?"

In her ready and inevitable assumption of intentional guilt on his part, no less than in the icy chill of her tone, Dick had immediate earnest of the charity and credence upon which to-

morrow if not to-night he must cast himself for mercy. No, not to-night! For to-night at least the brief respite which he had promised himself, the last moments of faith and happiness which remained to Daphne. Beside, there was always Trout—the faint inextinguishable hope that the mysterious little chauffeur might be able in some undreamed-of way to enlighten or to aid him. For this chance, slim as it was, he had already waited too long.

"My dear Daphne!" His words, though swift, were full of a reassuring heartiness. "What are you talking about? Since you are marrying an American, dear, you must learn to take a joke when you hear one! I only meant that if I didn't take proper care of this battered hulk of mine to-day, it might be landed high and dry by Tuesday. But as to any serious talk of trouble—my dearest girl, please *don't* be ridiculous!"

Daphne laughed faintly. The color had come back into her face, but her level eyebrows were still knotted disapprovingly as she replied:

"My dear Dick—well, if *that's* the American notion of a joke! Really, you quite upset me—when I thought of what people would say."

That faint shadow of disenchantment which, on that long ago day before the hedge, had clouded the serenity of Dick's thoughts, returned for the space of a moment to brood over them again. What people would say—always, always what people would say! But the interview with the elusive Trout was waiting.

"Good night, my dear Daphne. Now don't be a nonsensical little girl any more. I assure you, my head will be better in the morning. I dare say that very—er—very excellent sherry of your mother's was too much for it. Now if I can just say good night to Mrs. Medlycott and slip out quietly."

His wish in this particular was, however, not gratified. The impression which he had produced on the company was so inconveniently favorable that, from the dowager countess down, every one had a word of congratulation, of

British banter and of British cordiality, for the young American whom they found so charming. At last, and after a lengthy exordium by the dean, he contrived to escape. Daphne followed him to the hall for a final good night of a stately and almost touching kindliness.

Then Dick, who in his present state of mind asked for nothing but liberty to seek out the man who held the key to this tragical enigma, hobbled hastily down the steps and out into the fragrant summer night.

At any other time, the soft beauty of the scene might have fallen on his tormented spirit with some abatement of its fever. But now the dim rustling oaks, with the velvety sward beneath, symbolized to him only the short cut by which, evading the winding carriage road, he might arrive with best speed at the Abbey stables; where, he hoped, his enemy sat waiting for him. The ancient walls of the Abbey on his left, its moonlit cloisters and dark sheeted ivy, seemed to him no more than a splendid shell filled with the hollowness of human misery.

Before him, seated at the shadowy foot of an oak, he was suddenly aware of a white figure like that of a dryad—a slender white figure which rose half-shrinking as his halting step approached. A ray of moonlight, filtered through the dark leafy screen above them, lay on the glistening hair and the half-seen shadows of the eyes.

Dick stared—he had seen enough. Relief, anger, perplexity, a very fury of blind indomitable purpose—he hardly knew which feeling predominated in his mind as, forgetful of his lameness, he ran eagerly forward over the silent greensward and clutched a warm lace-clad arm in the vise of his hand.

"You!" he said fiercely. "You!" Then, forgetful of her ignorance of English, he added with sternness: "What are you doing here?"

The girl's face, upturned toward his, was quite white in the moonlight. Her shadowed eyes, lit by two liquid sparks of light, were turned full on him, then away, then back to him again. Her slight figure sagged from his hand.

Her whole aspect, strangely contrasted with the resolute audacity which on a former occasion had borne him off bodily as her prisoner, was filled with the very anguish of feminine helplessness.

Mystified, touched at the spectacle of so much pain even in the woman who had so grievously wronged him, Dick repeated his question:

"What are you doing here?"

The girl took in her breath. With a violent and obvious effort, she assumed again her shaken dignity. Her shadowed eyes met his with a calm and offended amazement. Then in halting tones but in perfect English she replied:

"Will you please let go of my arm? This is my home. I—I am Lady Bodley."

XII.

For a moment, Dick's disappointment seemed too sharp to bear. He dropped the lady's arm, collected his wits and bowed.

"I beg your pardon, Lady Bodley. I was misled by a very marvelous resemblance, and by the moonlight. Will you allow me to introduce myself? I am Richard Sugden, of New York."

Lady Bodley bowed. "The fiancé of dear Daphne—yes, I am glad to meet you, Mr. Sugden!"

But even as she murmured these conventionally disarming words, a little shaft of illuminating recollection shot through her listener's mind. This strange resemblance, so striking in the moonlight, might be a mere coincidence—yes. So, as an isolated instance, might be the reappearance of Trout and the white automobile. But the letter which, two days before, he had beheld in the hands of his betrothed, directed in that delicate angular script so familiar, so unmistakable—the same handwriting, in fact, in which his startled eyes had beheld, in the register of the Muckledean House, that fatal forgotten entry: "Mr. and Mrs. Jolliffe." No, further talk of coincidence was absurd, unthinkable!

In a sudden overwhelming impulse

he leaned toward the white figure, even then turning away among the velvet blackness of the oaks.

"I beg you," he said, "do not deny it any more! You are she, aren't you?"

Elliptical as was the phrasing of the question, it carried its meaning with it. In the same obvious and painful embarrassment as she had shown at his first glimpse of her face, Lady Bodley hesitated. One delicate hand was carried to her lips to stay their trembling. Then she answered, very quietly:

"I do not deny it, Mr. Sugden, I am she."

Through Dick's thronging brain, thought crowded thought. But even the girl's words, enormous as might be their significance, failed to fall upon his mind with the same intensity of conviction as the sparkling glint which the moonlight struck from the left hand at her lips. The plain gold band, the glittering solitaire beside it—this change from the girlish nakedness in which before he had viewed it seemed to him almost too monstrous a relief for his reason to credit.

"Then you're married?" he stammered, in a relief so enormous as to be inarticulate. "You are really married?"

Even in the moonlight he beheld the grief in her eyes. "I deserve your reproach," she answered in a low tone; "yes, I am the wife of Hamilton Bodley."

"Please," cried Dick earnestly, "don't think that I'm reproaching you, one way or another. But don't you see, by Scotch law I was afraid that you were my wife?"

Simply as they were uttered, such words addressed to a lovely young woman there beneath the moonlit oaks, fell even on Dick Sugden's ears with an oddly embarrassing effect. And though the clear eyes continued to regard him steadily, the cheeks showed even in the moonlight their betraying carmine.

"*Mais, mon Dieu*," she hesitated. "I don't understand! You are to marry Daphne on Tuesday, aren't you?"

Dick laughed grimly. "That's just the point," he replied. "Since taking counsel's opinion on the Scotch law in

such cases, I have been in very painful doubt about Tuesday—unless of course I was willing to risk the charge of bigamy cropping up at any moment. But don't distress yourself—please, please don't distress yourself, Lady Bodley!" as one white arm went groping suddenly toward the dark stalk of a neighboring oak for support. "Don't you see, it's all right now? Thank God, it's all right now!"

He fairly laughed aloud in the intensity of his relief. The smirching of his record, the dishonoring of his obligations, the bruising of a loyal heart which had trusted itself to him—all the looming horrors which had lain over him like nightmare were suddenly, miraculously dispelled. The mysterious shackles which had bound him were broken—had never existed. He was his own man once more, free and independent of blackmailers, of barristers, of the House of Lords itself.

"But I don't understand," faltered Lady Bodley. "You talk of Scotch law and of—of bigamy." Her voice went low and her shudder was visible even in the pallor of the moonlight. "You forget I don't understand. I'm an American—"

"So am I!" The hearty triumph of his laughter went for the second time rolling among the ancient trees. "And Lord bless your soul, I didn't know any more than you, what it engaged us to when we let those oatmeal eaters take us for—er—husband and wife."

Again he saw that glowing signal of confusion on her cheek; and this time he hardly knew why, an odd inexplicable thrill ran through him. With a faint unformulated dread of this sudden sensation, obscure though it might be, he abruptly dismissed the subject which had given it rise.

"But that's all right now," he repeated quickly. "But tell me—you're an American, you say? And I took you for a Frenchwoman!"

Lady Bodley's hands, twisting and untwisting before her, betrayed the inward confusion of her soul; but her voice was calm as she replied:

"Though I was born in California,

my parents were French. And I—yes, I am an American. America has reason to be proud of me, has she not, Mr. Sugden?"

The sudden change in her tone, from assured dignity to the very bitterness of self-contempt, was sufficiently swift and amazing to pull Dick's attention up short. From the serene contemplation of his own assured salvation, he was brought to a sudden consciousness of the suffering in whose presence he stood. And his soul, melting always at the sight of pain, made haste to dismiss its own egotistic satisfactions in an eager attempt at consolation.

"But I say, Lady Bodley—please, please don't feel that way! What you did was perhaps a little bit odd, but as it left none of the ill consequences I feared we can afford to forget it, can't we? I'm sure you had the best of reasons for what you did. Remember, we are cousins—or shall be, after Tuesday. So we'll just let bygones be bygones, and agree never to say another word about it—sha'n't we?"

He spoke cheerfully, encouragingly, as one consoles a child. And it was the face of a grieved child that she lifted to him in the moonlight—the quivering chin, the parted lips; all but the somber eyes in whose lustrous shadow lay the whole suffering of a tortured womanhood.

"I wonder," she said slowly, "what you really think of me!" Then in a sudden passionate outbreak: "Oh, I can't bear it any longer!" she cried. "Day and night, night and day ever since, I have thought of nothing else. Then two days ago, when I saw you from the Abbey window, driving to the Medlycotts' door with Mr. Codrington, and knew who you were—and now when I meet you this way, face to face! It's no use, I must try to make you understand! Whatever you think of me for telling you of such things, it can't be any worse than you think of me now. Here—can't we sit down on the grass a moment? It's barely wet. And I mustn't make you do harm to your poor leg again!"

Her voice was full of a compassion-

ate concern as tender as had been the touch of her ministering hands, there on the salt-marshes beyond Carlisle. The moonlight turned her pale-brown hair to a shining aureole about her face. And as she seated herself beside him, her two bare arms clasping her fluffy skirts just below her knees, Dick was suddenly aware of that faint, remembered odor of violets. She seemed a creature ineffably young and soft and flowerlike. The tragic pain which lay on her face touched him with a grieved pity, like the sight of a weeping child or of a rain-broken blossom.

"It's no use!" she repeated passionately. "After inflicting such an injury on you, I must make you understand! Tell me, Mr. Sugden, you have met my husband, Sir Hamilton Bodley?"

Dick essayed a polite assent. But her eyes, frank and piercing, were on his; and the words of conventional compliment died in his throat. She went on painfully.

"Then you know already—better than I could tell you. Though you don't know—no man could possibly know—what it is to be married to him!" She paused for a moment, as with an effort to hide her repugnance. Then she went on quietly: "The reasonable question is, of course: Then why did you marry him? Perhaps, because I knew no better. I wasn't very old—it was two years ago, and I am only twenty-three now, though I look so much older, I know. Yes, I was young, then; and I'd been educated in the French fashion, you see—a little white goose if ever there was one, *mon Dieu!* Beside that, I was in a very difficult position. I lost my mother when I was a young girl, and my poor papa died of exposure after the earthquake. And our home in San Francisco was destroyed, and—well, I couldn't starve, could I? So when a little Jew manager, hearing me sing a sick baby to sleep in the emergency camp, gave me an offer to sing in the little board theaters, they had run up—well, I jumped at it! I was too ignorant, you understand, to know why I shouldn't. And just as I had begun to find out"—she drew in her

breath in a long shuddering sigh—"along came this grand Englishman with his pleasant words, and his generosity and his kindness—that is, I took it for kindness. I didn't know then, you see, what he has told me so often since—that the first night he heard me sing, he betted the gentleman he was with that he was going to get that girl even if he had to marry her. Well, he married me, so he won the bet—it was a thousand dollars, and he lost it the third night of our honeymoon, at Colorado Springs. And our life since then—can't you guess? Can't you guess?"

Dick nodded slowly. Through his mind ran a vision of those puffy, leering eyes, and the echo of the oracular complaint: "Marriage, my dear chap, marriage is the devil!"

"Yes," he said, "I understand."

"Though, please," she said eagerly, "don't think me too disloyal. What's the use of talking? I *am* disloyal, when I think or speak this way of my husband. But these last two years, how I have tried—how I have prayed for help! For my mother brought me up in her church, which regards marriage as an indissoluble sacrament. In the eyes of God I was Hamilton's wife—nothing could alter *that*. So I told myself, I was in the wrong to be unhappy. I tried to believe it was my duty to keep him from drinking, and when he fell it was my failure and fault, not his. I tried to believe that it was because I was so stupid and childish that he found my—my companionship insufficient."

Again the quick blood sprang to her cheeks. Dick nodded in grave understanding. "Yes," she went on desperately. "I bore it all—for these two years I bore it all. I had no one to tell me, you see, that mine was not the ordinary lot of a wife. I had no friends—we traveled all the time, from place to place. And I tried, from the bewildered bits of light that I possessed, to piece together a life for myself—for myself and my poor husband. So things went on well enough, as they might have gone on till the end. If it hadn't

been for—for what happened on the steamer."

Dick was silent, but his eyes asked the question which his tongue would spare her. She laughed bitterly.

"Oh, you needn't be afraid to ask," she said. "It's no secret. Everybody on the steamer knew. For there on the passenger-list, you understand, there were two names—two—two Lady Bodleys."

"What?" cried Dick. She laughed again.

"You are shocked, aren't you, that I should even know of the existence of such things? I feel quite sure, dear Daphne doesn't—that is, not to realize them! And neither did I, I give you my word—that is, I had suspected, I had understood in a vague kind of a way, when my husband would disappear for a week and leave me alone at the hotel, or when a glove that was not mine would fall from his pocket; yes, of course I was no child any more, I had an idea of what was going on. But the idea—that was so different from the flesh-and-blood certainty, brought face to face with me! So there she was, on the steamer, with her maid and her Boston bull and her rugs—and Hamilton walking the decks with her, every day!"

"What—then it was with your husband's consent that she used his name?"

"Oh, no, no! For, in his way, though you may not have noticed it, he's a very proud man—proud of his name, of his ancient family. And on this English steamer, coming home as Sir Hamilton, after so many years, he was very anxious to keep up appearances. His idea, you see, was to have his cake and the fun of eating it, too. So after this audacious freak of hers he made her a wild scene, I believe. Then he came and cried to me over his ruined name, and I forgave him, for the hundredth time—it was a habit by this time. And indeed, with all my own faults, who am I to refuse my forgiveness when it is asked for? So I forgave him—with my whole heart, indeed! And I told the people we happened to know on the ship, it was a

mere coincidence. And I bowed to her, and patted her dog, when we passed her on the deck. But the last day but one, after we had passed Fastnet, Hamilton got champagne from the smoking-room steward. Then he went back—before everybody, he went back to her. And at the hotel in Liverpool, I found her name registered almost directly below ours."

Light began to come in upon Dick's bewildered consciousness. "That was in Liverpool," he asked, "just this past week?"

"This past week? No, this very week last Monday! It was the day we had intended to start for Chilham, but Hamilton had pleaded bad health, and urged the idea of waiting for our new automobile, so that we could drive straight up here in time for the wedding. Then I saw—I saw her name in the register, and understood why he had insisted on waiting till the last possible moment before leaving.

"That night, he never came back to our apartment in the hotel. I sat up all night, like the wife in the comic papers, and waited for him. I can't tell you why the affair affected me so indescribably. It wasn't that I loved him. No, any love I had ever felt was dead on our honeymoon, before we reached Colorado Springs. But I had looked forward so long to this home-coming—Hamilton had spoken with such pride, such confidence of the new life we were to make here together—that I almost believed, I almost hoped. Then to see all those new hopes come tumbling down together—it seemed more than I could bear! And that woman, not shadowy in the background any more, but there in our very hotel, with her dog and her picture-hats—it was too much. There was no question of patience or forbearance any more.

"Then in the early morning, when he came creeping back to our rooms, all shaking and red-eyed, and told me to send that message to his aunt here at Chilham, saying that he was too ill to come— So I went down-stairs to the office of the hotel, and who should be brought up to me then but the little

chauffeur that the Maja people had sent around with the car Hamilton had ordered? We were planning for an early start, and the servants had everything packed and ready. Oh, how I longed to be off! That hotel at Liverpool seemed a prison, a noisome prison to me. I hated my husband, may the *bon Dieu* forgive me! I hated myself, I hated my life—it seemed to me, the open road was the one thing to help me forget my degradation and my sorrow.

"And there at the door of the hotel our automobile was waiting—mine as well as Hamilton's. I knew how to run it. I had taken lessons in Chicago, and in New York. I held a chauffeur's license. Oh, the glorious, glorious road! I heard it calling me. I couldn't resist it. You can guess the rest, Mr. Sugden?"

"The part of it," he answered, "that I don't happen to know for myself."

Again she flushed. "I am coming to that," she said, "but then I only sent the bell-boy up-stairs for some of our luggage, and went out to that beautiful great car, all clean and glistening in the early sun; then, almost from force of habit, I cranked her and jumped in. And when the boy came back, I turned the lever and felt her throb and spring forward under me—oh, I give you my word, Mr. Sugden, there was no thought in my mind worse than in the fireflies that I used to catch as a child in the Sierras, when I let them out of their bottle and set them free to fly out into the night."

"I had no plan, no ideas. I wanted to escape, that was all, from a companionship that seemed to soil and sicken me. I was a little mad, perhaps. The last days on the steamer had been hard ones—then the sight of that woman again at Liverpool, and that long sleepless night when I sat and waited for my husband! You know, I come by both sides of a race that cannot face an emotional crisis with the calmness of you other Anglo-Saxons. I was driven by the Furies—yes it was the Furies themselves that drove me as I drove that car through the city streets, out through the suburbs, out and away on the open

road—toward the north, as it happened, but I didn't know, I didn't care.

"Do I make you understand, Mr. Sugden? Can you appreciate what it meant for a woman who even without love has striven to do her duty by her husband, to see her place beside him taken by another woman—who sees herself insulted in her very honor, openly and before the world?"

"It doesn't take much imagination," answered Dick gently, "to appreciate that, I think!"

She cast a little pitiful glance upon him. "You really agree with me?" she asked, with simplicity. "Because, as I never had any one to ask, it has often seemed to me that perhaps I was lacking in charity, that I did wrong to fly into so furious a rage of indignation. For I was furious, Mr. Sugden! All that morning—as I flew along, my thoughts went back and back to that hotel at Liverpool. Would my husband care that I had left him? Would my desertion inflict upon him a measure, ever so slight a measure, of this dreadful pain and outrage that he had inflicted upon me? I knew better than to suppose it. He had other company, other consolation!"

"It was that thought, Mr. Sugden, that set my very blood to boiling with the necessity of revenge. I knew so well, you see, where I could sting him. His pride in this ancient name of his, his jealousy of the family honor which, however soiled in his own person, must be guarded pure and above suspicion by his wife. Then, in spite of myself, I remembered a play that I had read on the steamer—one of my poor father's books that I had never been allowed to look into as a young girl. 'Francillon,' do you know it? It tells how a woman, in the same case as I, goes out and revenges herself on her husband. It horrified me! I cannot tell you the horror I felt that such a recollection should ever come into my mind, and I prayed the good God to forgive me for even the sin of my thought."

"But all that morning, with the sun beating down on my head and the wind rushing in my face, that wicked little

thought came back—and back—and back like an adder that cannot be shut out. In my mind I was *Francillon*. Certain lines of the play that expressed my suffering, the horror of the outrage that I suffered—they were in my brain like the workings of my own soul. It was in her very language that I thought—my mother's, my father's language.

"That was why, when I stopped in answer to your hail, that without thinking I answered you in French. And then when I saw you took me for a Frenchwoman, the idea came to me—as quick as a flame, and as irresistible—of how I might make the mistake serve me to my own advantage. Exactly how bad your injuries were, and how far they placed you in my power and the car's, of course I could not tell. I had to take my chances—but I said to myself, it was worth the risk! For I knew that, almost without your knowing it, I could so arrange appearances that to-morrow my husband would be writhing as *Francillon's* had done."

"But tell me," asked Dick in curiosity, "since you know English after all, didn't you understand from what I said to you that day who I might be? The very wedding you were coming to, the very place—didn't you even suspect who a stray bridegroom, here by the walls of Chilham, might possibly be?"

"You forget, Mr. Sugden, my perfect ignorance of this country. This is the first time that I have ever crossed the Atlantic. What means had I for identifying the place where my wild ride had brought me? As for its being Chilham itself—as a matter of fact, I had figured the place as farther, very much farther north. I did not realize, you see, the tremendous speed at which I had traveled the hundred-odd miles from Liverpool—though two or three mounted policemen had tried to call my speed to my attention!

"So, when I took you into my car, it was without the slightest, the vaguest suspicion of who you might be. Though I understood clearly enough, to my shame I own it, the cruel wrong that I was doing you and to the bride that

was waiting for you. Should I have cared more, if I had known that the bride of whom you spoke was this dear Daphne herself? I do not know. I was thinking, you see, only of myself; and of the hour when my husband should find that his wife had gone to a hotel with a stranger, young, unknown, distinguished-looking—when he should see the two names, *Mr. and Mrs.*, side by side on the hotel register! What further he must think I didn't care—or I laughed to myself for satisfaction in the completeness of my revenge.

"And in my wicked delight at the dashing part which I conceived myself to be playing, I threw aside all thought of you. I took advantage of your wounded condition—base advantage. I betrayed the confidence that you had placed in me. I made cruel pain not only for you but for these friends who waited for you. That is what I did. And if I spent my life on my knees, not all my piety or wit—if I had any—can ever undo these things."

Her voice sank to the tones of a profound and piercing melancholy. Dick leaned toward her with cheerful reassurance.

"How often must I tell you," he said heartily, "that these things, since, after all, they have left no lasting entanglement behind them, are to be considered precisely as though they did not exist? When you are kind enough to give me this explanation, and to say that you are sorry, then they *are* undone—isn't that sound horse-sense and good Christianity? But go on, please; I'd like to understand what happened in the morning."

She surveyed him a moment in silence, while the wind stirred her moonlit hair. "A lasting entanglement!" She repeated his words. "When I think, Mr. Sugden, of the suffering I have made for you even beyond what I realized or intended—when I think of your going to a lawyer, of your believing you were separated forever from this charming Daphne whom you love—oh, it is unspeakable! But, no," in answer to his gesture of protest, "I'll try to do as you wish, I'll try to leave

the subject behind me. But—oh, the morning after? What you would expect, of course. My husband came for me. He had hired a detective, and another car. My trail was plain enough, you see!”

Dick shook his head in perplexity. “I don’t understand,” he said. “Mrs. Macnaughten told me, the gentleman that carried you off came in a large red automobile. And from Daphne I hear, that very day you and Sir Hamilton arrived from Liverpool by train.”

Her lips twitched in the ghost of a smile. “That was easy enough,” she answered. “It wasn’t hard to manage *that*, when my poor husband and I once came to the agreement that the one end to be desired was concealment. For in spite of his rage and mortification, which I assure you were as terrible as even I could wish”—she shivered lightly, and the laces over her bosom quivered in the moonlight—“in spite of his anger, he asked for nothing better than concealment of the past from his family here at Chilham. As I told you, his desire to maintain the family name untarnished, especially here at home, amounts at times to a mania that would make you pity him.

“As for me, though I saw that he utterly disbelieved my protestations of innocence, I asked nothing better than to return to the ranks of decent women that I had forsaken. Oh, I was limp enough, if you like—all the pride and violence and vengefulness had melted from me, that stormy night at Muckledean, as I lay awake and cried for horror at what I had done, till I was a wet rag in poor Hamilton’s hands.

“My one idea in the morning was to escape before you made your appearance—the thought of seeing you again was terrible to me! Then the dread of the scene my poor husband might make for you—he had brought his pistols with him, you see, and swore with most horrible oaths that he would put a bullet through you. Oh, I was willing to consent to anything rather than run the risk of open violence! So I jumped into the car with him, and he put up his gun, and we started for Chilham.

“Then it occurred to me what a risk we’d run of awkward questions and explanations if we ran straight to Chilham from the north. So I told Hamilton that if he really was serious about wanting to arrive as though we had come straight from Liverpool and nothing had happened, then we had better make the run to some point south of Chilham, dismiss the automobile, and take the train for home. He damned me for a troublesome—no matter! But he admitted I was right.

“You see, the shock and the fresh air and all had almost sobered him, and he was as anxious as anybody could wish to make his home-coming the dignified and respectable affair that he had planned. So after all, that was the way we came home, and nobody even dreamed of suspecting our story. Pidgeon, the only other person who knew, is of course fidelity itself.

“But my poor husband doesn’t forget—no, he doesn’t forget! Though the life that he had been living, with all this excitement on top of it, sent him to bed directly we arrived home here at the Abbey, and the doctor cut him off from alcohol, and put him on a treatment; but just the same, he keeps those pistols by him, and every little while when we are alone together”—again she shivered—“he makes scenes which, while they break my heart, are no more than I deserve, I dare say—and he plans to hire detectives, and follow up the man Joliffe and kill him. Then the next moment he cries, and offers me anything if only I’ll help him cover up the disgrace to the Bodley name.

“So that in spite of my anxiety and shame, I really felt myself safe enough; so far as that went; till the day after our arrival, Mr. Sugden, when I heard the tale of Daphne’s bridegroom who had so mysteriously disappeared—till I saw you, you yourself, and recognized you!

“Then the Maja company, when they sent along the machine to-day, sent with it as chauffeur the very same man that had come to the hotel, and whom they had sent north on a motorcycle to re-

claim it. And he recognized me as the same woman he had seen that evening at Muckledean; and he informed me this very afternoon he had recognized you as well. And then he told me, how he had arrested you that morning at Muckledean for the theft of the car that I myself had stolen.

"Mr. Sugden, is there any end to the troubles that this miserable girl has made for you? And can you ever forgive me?"

Dick's face broadened into a grin. "Oh, as for Trout's arrest of me—that was awkward at the time, I own, but as even he would confess I got the best of him *there!* So I think, I can afford to bear no grudge against anybody for that. But tell me; you say, he was sent here by the Maja company to Sir Hamilton—then he didn't come here on my trail as he said?"

His smile was faintly mirrored on her pale lips. "Is that what he told you? The little wretch! No, day before yesterday he was sent here to close the deal, and to-day, as my letter asking for another chauffeur had apparently been sent too late, back he came with the car. And now that he has seen me and recognized me, of course further protest on my part is out of the question. I am to duplicate his salary for him, out of my private purse. And he has promised he will keep silence about Muckledean. Those are the conditions under which I live, Mr. Sugden. So you see if I have sinned, I am rightly punished."

She bent her head abruptly so that the shadow concealed the suffering on her face. Dick shook his head in a perplexity as painful as her own.

"Yes, he has a bad twist on us, Lady Bodley, that little cockney has—I suppose we could hardly expect him not to use it for his own profit and advantage. In fact, I was on my way to the garage to make my little deal with him just now when I met you. But I suppose it will have to come off to-morrow. For you are right—in spite of the absolute harmlessness of our little adventure, we can't very well afford to have it generally known."

Lady Bodley scrambled to her feet. In slow awkwardness, Dick followed her example. With pale face thrown back, with hands outstretched, she addressed him with an earnestness that vibrated through her voice and body like an overcharge through a wire:

"Mr. Sugden, I implore you—don't even mention the idea, the bare idea of people finding out! It's bad enough to think that you know—it's bad enough to think of what my poor husband believes, though all question of love and respect was done with between us, long ago. But that hurts only me and I can bear it. But if Daphne should hear of it! Mr. Sugden, once already I have come near to ruining your life for you. I'd rather die, I think, than do such a thing again!"

"Lady Bodley, don't distress yourself with what may after all be a chimera! So far as Daphne and I are concerned, I can't believe but that if circumstances should bring the affair to her ears, and she heard your story exactly as you have told it to me——"

"Don't speak of such a thing!" Lady Bodley's voice went high and tremulous in a sudden intensity of pleading. "Since there's no danger of it's coming to her ears except through Trout, and his silence is for sale, I beg you, Mr. Sugden, even though it may be to sacrifice something of the dear confidence that I sometimes imagine as possible between husband and wife"—for a moment her voice broke—"even after years have gone by, and your love has become a faithful and established friendship—never, never breathe to your wife or to anybody else a syllable of this wretched story that I have told you to-night!"

"My dear Lady Bodley, how could you imagine that, under any circumstances in the world, a man could betray such a confidence as you have made me? Though I still maintain that should the truth ever come to Daphne's ears she might find it possible to forgive."

"To forgive you—yes, Mr. Sugden. But never, never to forgive me! I am a woman, you see, and I know." She paused a moment, then, lifting her face

and speaking with much force and simplicity:

"Mr. Sugden, listen to me. I come here to Chilham Abbey a stranger, with my record still to make. My life since the calamity of two years ago has been Bohemian, disreputable enough—ending up with this wild escapade of my own which has left me not even the thought of my own personal innocence to be my consolation. But here at Chilham, my life lies before me—until I had seen this place, indeed, I had not realized what an opportunity was mine, or what that life might be.

"But since coming here, Mr. Sugden, to this splendid place that is now my home, I have reflected, I have observed, I have prayed to Saint Veronica, my patroness. Now at last, it seems to me, I see my path plain before me; and I want, oh! how I want, to fill my position here with worthiness. Perhaps, if I try very hard, I can win the respect and love of this new world that I am brought into. Perhaps, even, I can help my poor husband to attain something of the position that ought to be his, here in Westmoreland and in London. Already, I have made a little beginning. To-day, Hamilton listened to me when I spoke to him of my innocence. And there has come to me like a revelation, the vision of the life I may build up here for myself if I only try—and if no word of the dreadful things that have been, comes back to ruin me. You'll help me that much, won't you, Mr. Sugden?"

Her childlike beauty, the equally childlike directness and simplicity of her words disarmed Dick Sugden from any resentment that he might perhaps have felt that such an appeal for his silence should be considered even necessary. "I beg, Lady Bodley," he said gently, "that you will give yourself no further concern in the matter. The whole business is forgotten—or, as it has left no effects of any kind behind it, we may say that it never occurred. Shall we shake hands on it, now?"

For an instant her hand lay in his warm reassuring clasp. Though no longer of the icy coldness which on a

previous occasion had struck him, the touch of her fingers seemed to him oddly elusive, strangely appealing; at any rate, entirely unlike the frank muscular squeeze with which Miss Medlycott was accustomed to favor her friends. And with no conscious comparison of the two women, he admitted to himself the curious compelling charm of the girl before him.

"I believe," she said in a suddenly conventional tone of ordinary farewell, "that I am to have the pleasure of seeing you to-morrow night at dinner, you and Daphne. And now, Mr. Sugden, thank you very, very much—and good night."

Her light form drifted off among the trees. Even after its nebulous whiteness had disappeared in the shadows, Dick stood gazing after the direction in which it had vanished. Then, as in a sudden unwelcome realization, he pulled himself together sharply. "Come!" he said aloud, "this won't do, you know!" And he fell to assuring himself of the joy, the immensity of relief which he felt, that after all he was free to marry Daphne Medlycott on Tuesday.

By the time Tom Codrington arrived at the rectory, perhaps half an hour after his guest, Dick's manner in imparting the news could leave no doubts of his being the happiest man in the world.

"I say, my dear Dick, I'm glad! I'm really relieved beyond measure—it was a nasty hole you'd got yourself in, you know!" The little curate's congratulations, warm as they were, had to give way to the yet more pressing items of personal news. "But I say, I have news—that is, *almost* news! I've been spending the evening, since you left, with my kind friend Sir Hamilton. And Lady Bodley herself was so good as to come in for a few moments just before I left. They were both most affable—most kind and encouraging. And by something Sir Hamilton said, I actually have hopes that the affair may be decided to-morrow, before the dean goes home. Fancy, my dear Dick, if by to-morrow I should learn that I am actually to be appointed!"

"I congratulate you, my dear fellow! It seems, to-night is our lucky night, for both of us!"

"Both of us? Oh, yes, of course." With an effort, the little curate brought his mind back for an instant to the less pressing topic of his friend's affairs. "Yes, this new development is a relief, a wonderful relief. So the young—ahem—person turns out to have been a married woman, after all! By the way, Dick, you never mentioned how the important news came to you. By post?"

"How the news came to me?" repeated Dick blankly.

Though this question was no more than might have been foreseen, he had neglected, in his excessive delight and relief, to provide against it. To admit the truth was impossible; and to lips which have always made a pride of their honesty, a lie comes haltingly. But to his immense relief, the little curate answered his own question:

"Now I remember you said, you were going to speak with Trout."

Dick caught eagerly at the word. "Trout? Ah, yes, of course, that little cad of a Trout!"

"It was Trout who gave you the proofs of this woman's marriage, my dear Dick?"

The curate's tone was enigmatical. Dick, however, had gone too far to retreat in safety. Not for his own sake, but for the sake of one who had trusted in him, he plunged boldly at the lie:

"Certainly, J. Trout. Who else could it possibly be?"

Hardly, however, were the words out of Dick's mouth before he regretted them. In Tom Codrington's round eyes, fixed upon his friend, there was an expression—shocked, inquiring, puzzled—which boded no good to the speaker. And his voice was again the voice of the office for which he was striving, as he replied:

"My dear Dick, I do not understand. Immediately after your departure from the Abbey, I went to Sir Hamilton. I found—er—Trout with him. He was entertaining his master, it appeared,

with eccentric songs and stories of the Paris-Madrid race. He was still there when I left. So you see, my dear chap——"

"Good night!" said Dick abruptly. And turning on his heel, he went off to bed.

XIII.

The next day, being Sunday, was Mr. Codrington's busy day. What with early celebration, Sunday-school and morning service, the only glimpse his guest could obtain of him was in the pulpit, starched and eloquent, pronouncing the admirable discourse aimed directly at the nodding Sir Hamilton. With Daphne beside him, however, and in his secure relief from the horrible oppression of the past few days, Dick Sugden could afford to dismiss from his mind the awkward little contretemps which had closed their explanations of last evening. Nor, to Dick's yet greater relief, was it mentioned when the curate, after a prolonged visit at the Abbey, came home finally to a delayed lunch. How indeed could he pause to give thought to any lesser affair, with the tremendous, the overwhelming news that he carried?

The Reverend Thomas Codrington was to be appointed rector of Chilhamcum-Wick! Sir Hamilton, the great and good Sir Hamilton, had suddenly decided to bestow this most desirable living upon his young friend who for the past year had so successfully administered its duties.

Dick, indeed, found it difficult to restrain a smile at the sudden transformation in the meek little curate. Success had puffed out his chest like a pigeon's, had deepened his voice and added a sudden brusque determination to his manner. He spoke of his dear friend Sir Hamilton, of the bishop to whom Sir Hamilton was writing and whom he himself must go to see very soon, with the easy air of one discussing equals and old friends.

His importance provoked a smile from Dick. A moment later, however, he was laughing, as the saying is, on the other side of his face.

The future rector, checking himself in the contemplation of his own unutterable importance, fixed a suddenly severe and ecclesiastical eye upon his friend.

"And so, my dear Dick, the wedding is to be on Tuesday?"

Dick stared. "On Tuesday? Well, I should hope so, unless a stray automobile carries off Daphne this time! For Heaven's sake, why not?"

Tom coughed lightly. His uneasiness was apparent, but his stern resolution to do his official duty was even more so. "Ahem!" he answered slowly. "Of course—but after these painful doubts of the past few days—"

"But Good Lord, man, the doubts are all disappeared. Didn't I tell you last night, the woman was another man's wife all the time?"

"Oh, yes," returned the curate absently, as though remembering with difficulty. "I do recall something of the kind. That is"—in hasty deprecation of Dick's impatient gesture—"I do remember, of course, the delightful news of your escape, but pardon me, my dear chap, I also remember some doubt—ahem—some doubt on your authority for the news."

Dick glared in indignation. "My dear chap, isn't my word authority enough?"

The little clergyman, though fluttered by his guest's stern anger, held stubbornly to his point. "My dear Dick, don't be dramatic. I don't mean to annoy you, upon my soul! But don't you see, I understood from you last night, it was Trout who gave you the news?"

He paused considerably. Dick, however, was quite able to fill in the missing statement which his host kindly left blank. And with the memory of last night's blunder fresh in his mind, he rapidly realized the absurdity of his present lofty attitude. Not only his necessity but his sense of humor urged the advisability of temporizing.

He grinned at Tom with laborious cheerfulness. "Say it out, old man! I said, I heard it from Trout, and all the time Trout was gratifying his master's taste for high society. So I fully and

freely admit, you have the laugh on me!"

Mr. Codrington, however, refused to admit this humorous view of the matter. "I beg, Dick, you won't think me officious—but really in this case you must see how, as rector of this place, I must feel my responsibility! So you won't be offended if I ask: Are you intending, as I suppose you are, to submit your proofs of these statements to Mrs. Medlycott or to Sir Hamilton as Daphne's guardian?"

"My proofs?" Dick answered, with some testiness. "My dear fellow, you know as well as I do, it is entirely out of the question for me to mention the matter to Daphne or her mother at all! Why should there be any objection to my presenting myself as an unmarried man of honorable character, to marry Daphne Medlycott, as I had planned to do before any of this miserable foolishness came up at all?"

"Miserable foolishness," repeated Tom slowly, "miserable foolishness." His pompous little face was drawn with a very genuine perplexity and distress. Then he sighed. "I wish from my heart that I could take that view of it," he said, "but when I think of Trout, and that hotel register, and the barrister's opinion and all that, tying you up hard and fast by document, by legal black-and-white—really, my dear Dick, don't you agree with me about the necessity of some documentary evidence in rebuttal?"

"Documentary evidence be hanged!" returned Dick, with impatience. "Talk reason, my dear fellow, can't you? The woman is married, and that's all there is to it."

"Yes, but—how do you know she's married? Did she show you her marriage certificate?"

"Good Lord, how does any one know that a woman is married? Did you ever ask Mrs. Medlycott to show you her marriage certificate?"

"My—dear—Dick!"

"Well, I didn't mean to shock you," returned the victim. "I only mean, some things go for granted."

"Then if this young—er—person's

marriage goes for granted, why did you take the trouble to go to Mr. Winterfield the other day? Pardon me, my dear Dick, but that's what I can't understand."

"Because I didn't know then that she *was* married, of course!" Dick's temper, though under strong bonds, was rising fast. The curate, though openly distressed, pursued the subject undaunted.

"Then—here we come to the essential point of the affair—if you didn't know her yesterday for a married woman, how do you know that fact to-day? Facts don't grow of themselves—you will see as readily as I do, they have to be conveyed. My dear Dick, please don't be offended with me if I ask again how this very interesting and important fact was brought to you?"

Dick was silent. For the moment, the earnestness of the clergyman's words almost disarmed the anger stirred up by his prying. To be sure, there was a certain reasonableness in what he asked. And for an instant, temptation was strong in Dick to invent a neat and circumstantial tale which might vouch for every necessary fact. But in addition to his repugnance to this form of exercise, there remained the mournful fact, already demonstrated, of his exceeding awkwardness in the fabrication of convenient falsehood. To give himself away would be bad enough; but should he, by bungling excuses, draw down suspicion on the woman who had so unreservedly trusted him—no, it was better to stick to the facts, however inadmissible. So he answered steadily:

"For the validity of my evidence, Tom, you must take my word. Any more details I am not at liberty to give you. And now, will you excuse me? I have one or two little matters that must be attended to, before I go up to the Medlycotts'. And you, I suppose, have your afternoon church to attend to!"

"Yes," returned the curate, "there's the vesper service." He sighed heavily. Mortification at his friend's distressing obstinacy was written large on his face. Then he rose to his feet. "Very well," he said, "I've done my best, I'm sure.

After this, I don't feel adequate to holding up any more responsibility in the affair. I'll see you at dinner at Lady Bodley's, Dick?"

So saying, the curate took his shovel-hat from Samuel, threw out his chest in assertion of his damaged dignity, and strode impressively off to the ancient little church of which he was now lord and master.

Then as Dick's leg, after the unwarranted strain of last night, protested against any lengthy exercise for to-day, he despatched Samuel to the village in search of a modest rig. An hour later he halted before the Abbey stables and called for Trout.

That gentleman was engaged in smoking cigarettes and polishing the head-lamps of his beloved white car. He met the brief unfolding of Dick's errand with his usual cynical geniality.

"Fifty quid? Now, that's what I call 'andsome of you, sir," he remarked as he pocketed Dick's check. "Split to the gov'nor? Lawd, not me! J. Trout y'nt the kind that splits on a friend, I can tell you that!"

Dick surveyed the little man grimly. "If you had been as certain of that point the other day as you are now, you would have spared me some anxiety," he said.

The little white face laughed impudently into his own. "Lawd, wasn't you scared the other day, when I ketched you! Thought I'd come like a sleuth on your trail, all the w'y from Carlisle—"

"What!" cried Dick. "You mean to say, you *didn't* trace me?"

Trout grinned. "No I didn't. Cos why? Cos I didn't *need* to! Just come with the machine as ordered by Sir 'Amilton from the comp'ny in Liverpool, and found you here ready and a-wytin' for me. Likewise the lydy. So 'ere we all are together, as cowsy as can be. Lawd, you and the lydy don't need to be a-scared o' *me*! I'm a man with a 'eart myself, bless your soul—w'y, if it wasn't that I—"

"That will do!" said Dick sternly, gathering up his reins. And the chauffeur, with an enigmatical grin on his

little sharp face, returned to the polish of his glittering pet.

XIV.

That evening, Dick was formally presented by Mrs. Medlycott to Lady Bodley. And as bridegroom, he had the privilege of conducting her to dinner.

The flash of white teeth, of white shoulders; the sparkle of black shimmering draperies and of darker, brighter eyes—such was Dick Sugden's first impression of his hostess. And even as the dinner progressed, he found it hard to restrain occasional glances of wonderment. Was this stately, dazzling apparition really one with the little wind-blown adventuress that he knew, or the shadowy phantom of last night?

Sir Hamilton at the head of his table, in evening clothes with a white orchid, appeared a very different person from the whimpering invalid in the wadded silk dressing-gown. To be sure there was still a betraying quiver to his hand, and the watchful Pidgin was on duty behind his master's chair to see that none of the freely flowing champagne found its way into his glass. Otherwise, Sir Hamilton was playing with decided success the part of respectable country gentleman, for which he was so determinedly trying.

In the future rector of Chilham, the same air of a heavy and self-conscious virtue was rather painfully apparent; so that Dick, recognizing his own precarious position, regarded him with a vague and rising alarm. The docile and kindly Tom was, in fact, transformed, like Prince Hal himself, by his sudden elevation into power.

The very intoxication of power had seized upon his soul, and he saw himself the spiritual arbiter of his little world. Whether his friend wished to be plucked back to the paths of rectitude, made after all very little difference; the more unwelcome the process to the sinner, and the more distasteful to the rescuer himself, the greater the spiritual merit thereof. To the very church herself, Dick Sugden must give his proof before this marriage should go on.

Dick, meeting his friend's solemn orbs across the table, read his thoughts like a book. His tortured spirit fell again to despair. But in spite of the torment of his thought, he was unable wholly to drive from his mind the fantastic and tragic absurdity of this present gathering. To the casual observer, as to the greater number of those present, this dinner-table appeared the most placid, prosy family party in the world.

But beneath the roses, and the winking silver candelabra, and the murmured banalities of conversation, Dick realized with an odd thrill what strange dark passions were secretly fermenting.

Dick's troubled thought, traversing the table, came back again to his right hand, to the sole point where, beneath the commonplace politeness of conversation, he knew that it found echo and understanding. And strange to say, in spite of the dangerously explosive nature of the secret bond thus formed, he was unable to deny to himself a certain odd pleasure in its existence. Between them, he and Lady Bodley shared the perilous secret which, if openly revealed, would scatter the peace and security of the family party like a dynamite bomb. At the immensity of the trust which they thus tacitly reposed in each other, he was conscious of an odd glow in his soul. In spite of her flagrant wrongs toward him, her explanation of last night had awakened not only his pity but his respect. He not only trusted her, he was glad to trust her. And it pleased him to remember that this very afternoon, he had been called upon to do battle in her defense.

After all, how had it been possible for him, on that first evening when he sat face to face with her, to take her for anything but the American she was? Her French blood might indeed have endowed her with her facile Gallic tongue, with the quivering intensity of feeling which makes of an emotional impulse a thing not to be denied. But American, beyond that of any other race in the world, was the disarming innocence which had enabled her to touch fire without being burned, to go to the very edge of the precipice and draw

back unharmed. American also, in spite of its touch of Parisian coquetry, was the type of beauty which she represented; the clear-cut features, the pale yet luminous skin, the vibrant high-strung intensity of gesture and of glance. In spite of the delicate femininity which breathed from her very perfume, from the very rustle of her dress, there was in her kind uncoquettish glance an oddly boyish simplicity. She carried her womanhood as it were a sheathed weapon, of whose potency she alone was unaware.

And yet for the fierce possibilities which lay smoldering beneath that girl's sweetness, Dick had ample and convincing warrant. And in spite of himself, his mind was haunted by that obscure fancy which, on the salt-marshes beyond Carlisle, had so beset it; the vision of this ardent, impetuous soul, urged onward not by fear but by the beckoning desire of the man she loved.

Well! To be sure, it was none of his business. But surely, without disloyalty to his future wife across the table, he might admit to himself the intrinsic picturesqueness of the idea; just as he might acknowledge, impersonally and calmly, the physical perfection of the woman who called it forth.

The dinner went on to its close; conversation rose, fell, rose again to the toasts and informal responses which closed the repast. The health of the future vicar of Chilham was drunk with appropriate seriousness, and answered with true ecclesiastical sprightliness by that gentleman himself. The bride and groom, being proposed by Sir Hamilton, proved a brisker subject; so, in spite of Tom's troubled eyes across the table, did the bridegroom's response. The dean nodded approval. Daphne, simpering sweetly, looked down into her white muslin lap.

The trying family dinner had come altogether to a most successful conclusion as Lady Bodley, picking up eyes around the table, departed with her aunt and cousin to the drawing-room beyond the velvet-curtained hallway. The dean, being constitutionally averse to tobacco smoke, followed the ladies.

Sir Hamilton, Tom Codrington and Dick were left alone at the table. For the first time the American was aware that his vague forebodings of the afternoon had crystallized suddenly into a very definite and menacing possibility.

For a moment there was silence. Then Tom, coughing delicately, glanced at the attentive Pidgin, just then in the act of serving his master with a glass of hot water. The languid Sir Hamilton, rousing himself to sudden interest, took the hint and dismissed the man.

Dick, sipping his curaçoa with resolute calmness, glanced from one to the other of the faces opposite him. In the stern yet scared eyes which Tom bent upon him, Dick read the nature of the coming interview; and his heart stood still at the possible consequences of revelations to come. How much of his confidence, he asked himself, had this blunderer betrayed?

The momentary silence was broken by a little titter from Sir Hamilton at the head of the table. "More troubles, I hear, Sugden," he remarked easily. "Lord bless me, if I don't think you're tryin' to renig from the job of marryin' Daphne at all. And I'm bound to say, after keepin' her waitin' for ten years, it's a damned ungentlemanly sort of way to treat a girl. A girl like Daph, too—well-born, and——"

"Sir Hamilton," returned Dick, white with wrath, "what grounds have you for your belief that I do not stand ready to fulfil my engagements with Miss Medlycott?"

"What grounds?" returned the baronet sulkily. "Come, that's a good one! When it happens I've heard from Tom——"

Involuntarily Dick's fists doubled up against themselves, but Tom, with the sweeping gesture of the peacemaker, rose to pour oil on the waters which he himself had so effectively troubled.

"My dear friends! I beg you, listen to me a moment! Sir Hamilton, we must take it for granted that our dear Richard asks nothing better than to fulfil his honorable obligations. Dick, you must not be offended that Sir Hamil-

ton shows the natural concern of a responsible relative. For our dear Daphne's sake——"

"Come to the point," interrupted Dick sternly. "How much of this affair have you related to Sir Hamilton?"

Sir Hamilton nodded wisely at his glass of hot water. "So he admits, there *is* an affair," he observed oracularly. "Bad thing, that! Why, I remember——"

"Certainly, since the matter seems to have come to your knowledge, Sir Hamilton, I admit there has been a certain affair," returned Dick coolly. The baronet's words, though sorely annoying, were at least proof that whatever had come to his ears, he was not yet in possession of the perilous facts which would enable him to put two and two together. In the calmly leering eyes of Lady Bodley's husband, Dick read the assurance that Lady Bodley's secret was still safe. And at whatever awkwardness to himself, he resolved that it should remain so.

Meanwhile, Tom, in his best pulpit manner, was expounding the case as he saw it.

"My dear Dick, you must not feel that I have betrayed your friendly confidence, or that I have imparted to Sir Hamilton any of the details beyond the leading fact that an—er—entanglement exists. As your friend and Daphne's, as—er—the spiritual guide of this place, could I do less than refer the matter to Daphne's nearest male relative and natural guardian? He will decide for us all. May I venture to express the hope, my dear fellow, that you will treat the matter reasonably? And I beseech you, do not mistake my motives in fulfilling what I have felt to be my most sacred duty."

In spite of some pomposity of manner, there was in Tom's voice a very honest distress which vouched for his entire sincerity. For one moment, in a flash of realizing imagination, Dick beheld himself from the outside, with his friend's eyes; as a man self-confessed in a binding matrimonial tangle, suddenly claiming the right on evidence hidden and unrevealed, to contract a

new alliance with a spotless and unsuspecting woman.

He met the curate's glance steadily. "Tom," he said quietly, "I am very sorry that you were not able to take my word as sufficient warrant for my freedom to marry Daphne. Especially, as it is not in my power to offer either to you or to Sir Hamilton any assurance but that which I have already given."

"But I say, look here!" Sir Hamilton, propped up by the curate's recognition of his dignity as head of the family, was evidently eager to fill the part with a becoming seriousness. "See here, Sugden, from what I understand from Mr. Codrington here, this is a damn serious matter. It's not the affair itself—hang it, who hasn't had an affair? Look here, Sugden, I can understand your not wantin' to unbosom yourself to the padre here, but to me, now! Come, as one man of the world to another!"

Dick shook his head. "I'm afraid, Sir Hamilton, there would be nothing to interest you," he replied coldly.

"Interest me? Hang it, that ain't the question," retorted the baronet peevishly. "The point is, I understand from Tom here, that you have an uncommonly fishy-lookin' complication in your past—matrimonial complication—the worst kind. What did I tell you the other day? Never let a woman get the legal grip over you; which is, as I understand, exactly what you in your young days went and did. I hear you've taken expert legal opinion on the question, since comin' here to England; and you're told that unless you can prove a previous marriage on her part, she's got you tied up hard and fast."

"That's just the point," returned Dick coolly. "It happens she was a married woman!" At the very sound of his own words, with their inevitable implication, his spirit recoiled in a kind of disgust. However, his qualifications for the part of Don Juan were not on trial at present; though beyond a doubt, there was a certain unpleasantness in thus letting himself down to the moral level of his inquisitor.

At this last assertion of his victim,

Sir Hamilton shook his head in an immense knowingness. "A married woman—oh, I say, now! If you take their word for it they're all respectable married women, from *Mrs. Tanqueray* down. Now, look here. Let's get down to business. I understand that the proofs of this marriage of yours exist in black and white?"

"The proofs of the proceedings which I am told might be held to constitute a marriage—yes!" returned Dick steadily. "But you see, they don't!"

"Ah, don't they? But *why* don't they? There's the point, you see!" returned the baronet, with immense cunning. "You yourself admit, proof exists in black and white that a marriage has taken place. Very well. What proofs have you to show, in case of need, that this marriage was no marriage at all?"

"That's just it, you see!" struck in the curate, emboldened by the determination of his ally. "As things are, the only legal proof produced, or producible, are all one way. And though Mr. Winterfield refused, as a solicitor, to give any opinion on the matter, still he did not deny the extreme danger of your rushing into another marriage without indubitable proof that the first was—"

"Mr. Winterfield? Then you have been to Mr. Winterfield?"

Tom looked slightly sheepish. Then, gathering his dignity: "My dear fellow, what could I do? As a clergyman, I can pronounce only on the ethics of a given case; of the legal aspect on which to base my opinion, I am entirely ignorant. I called, therefore, on Mr. Winterfield this afternoon. When he found that I, as your confidant, was as entirely in possession of the facts in the case as he was himself, he made no difficulties about talking to me. And his opinion, though given unofficially of course, was entirely identical with my own; that unless you possessed open and indubitable proofs of the woman's previous marriage, you run grave risks in marrying Miss Medlycott on Tuesday!"

"Then why in the doose's name," in-

quired Sir Hamilton testily, "don't you give your proofs and be done with it? Sendin' to America and back—to be sure, it would delay the wedding on Tuesday. But then, you might cable. Or you might even just give a few facts in the case. Hang it, Tom, the facts in the case would be enough, wouldn't they? Just to see if they'd satisfy all reasonable doubt for us and for Winterfield. Gad, that's not much to ask. But hang me if I see how we can give our consent without!"

"That's a good idea!" said Tom eagerly. "Just a few facts—you needn't be afraid of their going beyond us! Just the woman's name, her husband's name, their address and so forth, so that we can feel absolute security against the incident ever cropping up against you in the future. Just think how painful, if Daphne should find out about the affair in such a way as *that*! Whereas, if you will only consent to set the affair at rest now, you may be sure of its never coming to her ears."

"Hang it, you don't suppose we'd split to Daphne?" inquired Sir Hamilton indignantly. "That is, of course, in case everything turned out to be O. K. Though, hang it, my cousin Daphne's no schoolgirl. She's a sensible woman. She ain't asking any questions about your past, nor Aunt Moll, either. But just the same—another wife, you know, that's bad. And as Daphne's guardian, I say: Show me some legal proof to invalidate those existing proofs of your marriage, or else there won't be any wedding on Tuesday. That's flat!"

The reformed rake, once mounted on the moral failings of other people, rides a secure hobby. No orator in the House of Commons to which Sir Hamilton aspired, could speak with a more convincing rectitude than he in defense of his wronged cousin. And the worst of it was that Dick had to confess to himself the entire reasonableness of this decision against him. Suppose even that, in the full consciousness of his innocence, he married Daphne Medlycott on Tuesday; and on Wednesday was approached by Trout for blackmail, or denounced by Mrs. Macnaughten of

Muckledean as a wilful bigamist—what proof would be have of his innocence, other than lay in his possession now, and which as a man of honor he was forbidden to use?

Not till this moment had he recognized the absolutely inextricable nature of the net into which, like a snared fish, he had blundered. Swiftly his mind writhed—to the right, the left he could see no possibility of escape. To keep silent? This was to walk straight back into the plight which yesterday had filled him with such horror; to his enforced desertion of his long-plighted bride, on the very eve of marriage. Suppose, on the other hand, he spoke? Apart from the impossible caddishness of betraying the woman who had trusted in him, what had he to gain by such brutal and untimely candor? To speak in betrayal of Lady Bodley would brand not only his honor but his common sense. And while he had never had much sympathy for those heroes of romance who for some fantastic scruple of honor refuse to speak the lucid word which might terminate their troubles; still, in this case, he could not see that any choice was his save the Quixotic, disastrous, necessary course of silence.

"I regret very much, Sir Hamilton," he replied concisely, "that I am unable to comply with your request for the lady's name. Equally, her husband's name and their residence must remain a secret."

Sir Hamilton started up. "Now look here," he said, "that's cheek. Damned cheek! And what satisfaction have you to offer us that if we let this thing go on, Daphne Medlycott won't be the wife of a bigamist—no wife at all?"

Dick, rising to his feet, answered the baronet's question with a determined finality.

"What satisfaction, Sir Hamilton? The pledge of a man who never yet has broken his word, that no tie of any description exists on this earth, to interfere with my taking Daphne as my wife."

"Your word?" cried Sir Hamilton. "Good Lord, do you think I don't know the world? And what's a man's word,

where women are concerned? Hang it, he's not even *expected* to tell the truth! No, legal proofs are what we must have. And you refuse 'em. Very well then, as Daphne's guardian I regret to inform you, there will be no marriage on Tuesday!"

For a moment there was silence. Tom Codrington, though unshaken in conscious rectitude, looked horribly scared at this final bursting of the calamity precipitated by his own hand.

Then Dick spoke very quietly:

"You forget, Sir Hamilton, that Daphne is of age. It is to her decision, not to yours, that I must come. Will you kindly excuse me? I will go to her at once."

"Hang it," stammered the baronet, "you don't mean to say, you're goin' to tell Daphne yourself? And what are you goin' to tell her, after all?"

"Exactly," returned Dick steadily, "what has been told to you. If she feels for me the love and trust which, as her future husband, I try to deserve from her, then we need have no fear of the result. Meantime, I suppose that I need have no doubt of your complete silence on the subject?"

The two gentlemen addressed looked at each other. Tom coughed dubiously. "Unless Daphne herself comes to me for advice on the matter, in which case I cannot refuse to discuss it with her—yes, I agree to keep silent, of course," he returned, with dignity.

Sir Hamilton nodded. "That's the idea! You tell Daphne yourself—I'm sure it's a job no one wants to rob you of! And unless we're called on to give advice, mum's the word."

"Thanks very much," returned Dick coldly, "and now, will you kindly excuse me?"

In spite of the stiffness of his maimed leg, Dick Sugden's progress down the tapestried corridor which led to Lady Bodley's drawing-room, was reasonably rapid. Then, however, reflecting on the suspicion which would inevitably be aroused by any dramatic entrance, he subdued himself to the endurance of an hour's placid conversation. Sir Ham-

ilton and the future vicar, entering a few moments after him, assured themselves in obvious relief that no explosion had yet taken place.

In mounting excitement, Dick Sugden sat and waited. Finally, however, and pleading her dear nephew's poor health as an excuse for early withdrawal, Mrs. Medlycott rose to her feet. A few moments later, Dick stood saying good-by to his betrothed, at the door of the Medlycott wing.

"Daphne," asked Dick suddenly, in a voice hoarse with excitement, "do you trust me?"

She surveyed him with wonder in her calm blue eyes. "Why certainly, my dearest Dick," she replied gently. "Am I not going to marry you?"

The sweetness of her words fell on Dick's troubled heart like balm. "Bless you for that word, dear Daphne," he replied in a fervor of relief, "because I have something to tell you, which will test your belief in me to the utmost."

She laid her hand on his. "You need not be afraid to tell me, dear Dick," she replied softly.

He took in his breath, then spoke carefully, and with a steadiness which he was far from feeling:

"I have to own to you, Daphne, that there exists in my life a certain entanglement with a woman. No, don't pull your hand away, dear—do you suppose I would insult you by mentioning the affair in your presence, were it otherwise than entirely innocent? Though appearances, I regret to confess, are all to the contrary. There are some features to the case—I give you the whole truth—which might even be construed as threatening the legality of our marriage. Against these existing proofs, I am able to give you only the solemn assurance of my unstained loyalty, and of my absolute freedom both legal and moral, to make you my wife. Is that enough for you, Daphne?"

He leaned toward her with a passion of pleading. It seemed to him, it was his very honor that was on trial. Should Daphne refuse the security that he offered her, how should he ever face Tom Codrington and Sir Hamilton again?

How, indeed, would he ever face the bar of his own self-respect?

Daphne stared at him. "Tell me, Dick," was her unexpected answer, "does any one else know of this, beside just you and me?"

The question was a hard one, but he answered it unflinchingly. "Sir Hamilton and Tom Codrington both know of it. It is on their recommendation that I tell you."

She recoiled from him. "Then if they hadn't forced you to tell me, I should have been left in the dark all along! Why couldn't you have told me earlier, Dick? Since you *have* that kind of thing in your life, why couldn't you have told me earlier, when there was some choice left to me?"

How secure, in spite of everything, had been Dick's faith in Daphne's belief in him, he had hardly realized till this moment when both were found wanting. And he could not deny to himself that the revelation came as a desperate blow.

"Daphne," he said sadly, "then, I understand, you refuse to accept my word? You refuse to marry me on Tuesday?"

She stared at him like an offended goddess. "What choice have you left to me?" she repeated bitterly. "What choice have I—either to accept the leavings of another woman, or to wear the willow before the whole county? For the second time—the second time! No, I'd rather die than face *that*, I think! Never fear, Dick, in spite of everything that Sir Hamilton or Tom Codrington or anybody may say, I'll marry you on Tuesday!"

With this guarantee of his future marital bliss, the unhappy Dick was forced to be content. Mechanically he stooped to kiss her unresisting cheek.

"Good night, Daphne," he said sadly. "I'll see you to-morrow."

"Good night," she answered, and he left her. At the door he turned. She was still standing there in the yellow lamplight, like a frozen statue of indignation. With a horrible stricture of shame about his heart, Dick went out into the night.

XV.

The next morning was wet. A north-east storm, chilly and impenetrable, had swept down over Chilham with a moaning wind and long-drawn swirls of rain. Alone by the vicarage fire, Dick Sugden sat and smoked a meditative pipe. For Tom Codrington was absent on business connected with his new office; and a brief note from Mrs. Medlycott had informed Dick that her darling child was lying down in preparation for the ordeal of to-morrow.

Dick's first impulse of indignation, which had moved him to quit the roof of a friend who had so officiously betrayed his confidence, had given way to more prudent counsel. After all, it was only for a day; and for the greater part of that day, the curate's pressing affairs insured to Dick the enjoyment of his own unhappy solitude.

The situation which he was now called upon to face presented indeed all the perplexities of Friday and Saturday, with a new and aggravating element of its own. Then, as now, his distress was caused not so much by the idea of losing Daphne as by the thought of losing her respect, that of her friends, even his own. The promise which the girl herself had given him last night, of marrying him in any case, did not help matters very much. The face of scorn which she had turned upon him did not forebode a cheerful picture of the future family breakfast-table.

But even for so much salvation, what guarantee had he? Sir Hamilton had declared his intention of stopping the marriage, except on those conditions which Dick was not free to fulfil. Suppose, pursuant to his own and Daphne's resolution, the marriage should go forward, to what lengths would Bodley's determined morality carry him? Somewhere in the back of Chilham church, would a dark form rise to-morrow, and a voice say: "I declare the existence of an impediment. Mr. Sugden has a wife now living."

This was a pleasant thought with which to pass the afternoon; and nothing else came to disturb his solitude.

Outside, the rain dripped from the eaves; and the torn rose-bushes in the garden bent miserably before the wind.

The afternoon wore away. If Dick had looked for some message of forgiveness from Daphne, some word of relenting from her guardian, his hopes were doomed to disappointment. His solitude was disturbed by nothing more comforting than the pattering rain on the windows.

He had half expected Tom home for dinner. But owing, probably, to the present embarrassing situation between them, no less than to pressure of official business, the new vicar's home-coming was delayed.

Dick ate, however, with a very good appetite. Without, the storm had darkened the lingering day to a quickly folding night. The diamond-shaped panes, spangled with wetness, glittered in the candle-light. The rain-filled wind sang about the eaves of the rectory, and rustled the clustering vines about the windows.

Suddenly Dick's ears, as he toyed with the currants on his plate, were caught by the sound of voices in the hall without. He started—listened. That light step—it was not Samuel's, nor yet that of the solitary maid servant. That faint rustle—that soft, half-heard voice—could it be? Was it Daphne herself? After all his waiting, his tribulation, his perplexity, had she herself come to him with comfort and forgiveness? Bless the dear girl—bless her tender heart! With words of tenderness and self-reproach on his lips, he started toward the door. It opened—and admitted Vera Bodley.

For a moment she hesitated, staring at him. With her shining eyes, her wind-swept hair, the dripping glisten of her garments, she seemed no more than the very spirit of the storm, drifting in from the rain-filled darkness without. Dick stared at her; and his amazement found no other words than:

"Lady Bodley! This is good of you, indeed! But I thought—I thought it was Daphne."

With a gesture which flung back the dripping silk cloak she wore, she ad-

vanced toward him. Her wet white arms, bare to the elbow, were extended in the intensity of her excitement. In her brown eyes was the self-revealing, unconscious light which the moonlight of a few evenings before had made visible to him.

"Mr. Sugden," she panted, between laborious breaths, "tell me, is this true—is this true what I hear about you?"

Her words, ignoring as they did all necessity of explanation between them, fell with an odd naturalness upon Dick Sugden's ear. And in a fleeting shock of realization he was conscious that his amazement of a moment past had not been amazement at all—of course, it was Lady Bodley! In her circumstances, how could the facts have remained concealed from her—and being what she was, how could she keep away?

He made no pretense, therefore, at misunderstanding her question. "Yes, Lady Bodley," he answered quietly. "It's true, but I assure you—"

But the laboring breath, which vouched for her haste to do him justice, had already begun to return under her control. "Tell me, Mr. Sugden," she cried swiftly, "then it's to this miserable affair that I dragged you into, that my husband refers when he declares you already a married man?" The carmine wavered in her rain-wet cheek, but she went on unflinchingly. "This adventure, of which Tom Codrington is said to know the details—this entanglement, which the English lawyers pronounce equal to a valid marriage unless you can prove the previous marriage of the woman—the adventure is that of last week? The woman is I—I?"

Dick nodded. "Yes, Lady Bodley. You have guessed right," he answered quietly.

"And that's the reason," she went on breathlessly, "that you denied them the proofs they asked for, and without which they refused to let the marriage proceed?"

Dick nodded. "I gave them my word that it was all right," he said. "Oughtn't that to have been enough for them?"

"But it wasn't!" she cried. "And, oh,

under the circumstances I can hardly blame them—the dreadful, shameful circumstances for which I alone am to blame! But you, Mr. Sugden, because I had asked for your silence, you took all the shame and all the blame on your own shoulders. Rather than betray this miserable girl, you were willing to sacrifice your honor, to lose perhaps the very happiness of your life! And you thought I wouldn't hear of it? You thought I would accept such a sacrifice from you? Come, Mr. Sugden, come!"

Her hand, vibrating with the intensity of feeling that drove her, was on his arm. He looked down at it in a kind of wonder. "Come," he said, "and where?"

"To Daphne!" she cried. "And to my husband! That is what I came to tell you! Not another moment shall pass before they hear the whole story—before they put the blame where it belongs, and appreciate you at your true worth. Oh, I can't wait any longer—will you hurry, please?"

He looked at her very seriously. "But have you thought of the consequences—for yourself, I mean, Lady Bodley?" he said. "Sir Hamilton, as you have told me, stands ready to make a scene of the utmost violence when he finds—the man for whom he is seeking. There may be scandal—open rupture—the undoing of all that which, as you told me the other night, you have most at heart in coming home here."

"What do I care?" she cried. "Do you really suppose I am thinking of *myself*? The two things that matter are to prove to my husband that you are free of all entanglement, and to make dear Daphne believe that you are innocent of all disloyalty toward her. If I can do that, what does it matter what becomes of me? Come, I beg you, come!"

Still he hesitated. "I don't know," he said. "I don't know, Lady Bodley, whether I can consent to accept such a sacrifice from you—"

She turned away from him swiftly, and caught up her rain-soaked mantle from the chair where she had thrown it. Her hands trembled as she adjusted the

hood over her wet waving hair. "Very well," she said with determination, "if you refuse me your support and countenance in telling the truth, then I must just go to Daphne all alone."

He looked at her. Before the flame of resolution in her eyes, his own hesitation disappeared. After all, was it not the truth that she was going to tell? And was not the truth, incredible though it might seem, disarming and innocent enough?

"Wait a moment," he said, "while I ring for Samuel to bring my hat and umbrella. It's still raining hard, isn't it?"

"But you can't walk, with your poor leg!" she interrupted him suddenly, in tones of self-reproachful pity. "If I had taken thought for you as I should, I might have brought a carriage. Is it too late now to send Samuel?"

"Nonsense!" he declared imperatively. "If you don't mind walking slowly, my leg is quite equal to the short trip to the Abbey. If you aren't afraid of the storm, I really think that I can survive it!" He surveyed her in a sudden heat of admiration—not of her beauty, though in the candle-light she was very fair to look upon; but of her self-forgetting courage. "Lady Bodley," he said swiftly, "I appreciate what you are doing, believe me! But instead of troubling you with my thanks, I am merely going to say: This is no more than I would have expected of you!"

A few moments later they had stepped from the lamplit warmth of the rectory into the wet, wind-swept world without. Beneath the roaring oaks, the dim white road was their only guide. The wind blew out Lady Bodley's thin silk cloak, and wrapped it about Dick as he walked beside her. Her hand was on his arm, his umbrella did what it could to shelter her from the driving rain-drops.

And he was aware of the recurrence of that same odd sensation which he had experienced, that day on the road when this same woman had bound up his wounds and fed his hunger. It was not the beauty of her half-seen white face that moved him, he was sure of that;

nor yet the thought of her unhappiness, or of the unbending courage in which she walked. No, something deeper, more pervasive yet; a subtle sense of thoughts comprehended, of burdens shared, of home reached at last.

Daphne, though he loved her very much—yes, certainly he loved her—had never made him feel like that. But then Daphne was faultless, an angel far above human weakness or sin. Whereas the woman beside him, in the very frailties which she so passionately avowed, seemed strangely kindred in the warmth of her humanity.

He shut his mind against the thought, but the comparison would occur—had it been to her, instead of to Daphne, that he had been forced to go last night with his plea for faith and for understanding, would he have been so pitilessly denied?

And then, the thought of Daphne's face, of Mrs. Medlycott's voluble tongue, when Vera should unfold to them her unbelievable, self-condemning tale—though Dick was a man of average bravery, the scene of tears and hysterics toward which they were moving made his heart turn within him. While behind, sinister and ominous, leered the unbelieving eyes of Sir Hamilton Bodley.

Dick shook himself in the impatience of sudden self-contempt. However painful the scenes which awaited them in the immediate future, he was at least a man, with a man's strength to bear them. Whereas the little thing beside him—

For a moment, as they waited at the Medlycotts' door in the rain, he heard a little quick-drawn breath beside him which cut him to the heart in helpless sympathy. There was now, however, no retreat, no drawing back.

The trim maid servant flung open the door, and the two rain-soaked visitors were admitted into a flood of yellow lamplight.

"Miss Medlycott?" asked Dick, and his voice sounded oddly strained in his own ears. Vera's eyes, wide open and fixed in the lamplight, shone with so strange a light that Dick could not un-

derstand the maid's stolid unobservance. She ducked a respectful curtsy, however, to the great lady, then turned to the frantic Dick.

"Miss Medlycott to be gone, sir, and Mrs. Medlycott, tu. She left this letter to be give to you, sir, when you should call, sir."

And from the silver tray that waited on the hall-table, the maid presented him with a letter directed to him in Daphne's large masculine hand. Then she withdrew, leaving them alone together.

With eager fingers Dick tore the envelope apart. This is what he read:

MY DEAR RICHARD: After your recent conduct, you can hardly be surprised at receiving back from me the promise which, I regret to own, you seem so very unwilling to keep. I can, therefore, have no scruple of honor toward you in bestowing my *hand* where my *heart* has long been given. You will perhaps not be sorry to hear that Mr. Codrington and I were married this afternoon, by special license, by my uncle the dean. Owing to Tom's present delicate situation, we think it best not to announce the marriage at once. Therefore, as I must decline to remain here to face the pity of the whole county to-morrow, mama and I are going up to London on the Great Northern to-night; where, as soon as he is inducted into his new living, we shall be joined by my husband.

With best wishes for your success and future happiness, in which Tom joins, I am,

Very sincerely yours,

DAPHNE CODRINGTON.

"She's married Tom!" said Dick hoarsely. And thrusting the letter into Vera's hand, he walked off to the other end of the hall. Standing at the window, he looked out into the night. The lamplight touched the rain-drops into a thousand glittering spangles on the pane.

What did he feel?

Some mortification, doubtless. It is not without a measure of humiliation that a man beholds himself tossed aside like an old glove in favor of a rival.

Some emotion, perhaps. Are the ties of ten long years to be rent asunder, and nothing to be felt? Daphne, for whom he had worked, for whom he had denied himself the gay amusements of his comrades; for whom during this

past week he had so genuinely suffered—she whom by force of accepted habit he had regarded already as his wife, was now the wife of another man. And that man, the friend of his youth! They had turned their backs upon him. On the evidence produced they had adjudged him guilty, and had withdrawn their faith and their countenance from him. The shock gave him a curious sensation of sickness. More than anything else, he was conscious of a numb bewilderment. What was it, after all, that he felt?

Suddenly he was aware of a little touch upon his arm. Looking down, he saw two large eyes, swimming in tears of tragic pity, looking up into his own.

"You've lost her," said a voice, shaken with a compassion that seemed to rend the very heart which gave it utterance. "You've lost her, and it's all my fault. I came too late—I came too late!"

Her voice drooped to the very abasement of self-reproach. By the sight of her distress, Dick's mind was drawn from the contemplation of its own whirling confusion. Here at least was something definite, something actual. He took her hand. "My dear Cousin Vera," he said, forgetful of the sudden severing of the tie which might authorize this method of address, "don't feel so badly, I beseech you! After all, I am not so——"

He stopped abruptly. *Not so heart-broken*, he was intending to say, merely for the sake of giving consolation, but was cut short by a sudden and amazing perception of the absolute truth of the words. Heart-broken? Of course he was not heart-broken. On the contrary, he was glad!

In swift review his mind swept over the past ten years of his life—years in which, for the sake of his word once pledged, he had held himself faithfully bound by the shackles of a youthful engagement. His emotions on returning to this marriage, which on his appointed wedding-day last week he had dimly recognized as inadequate—what were they? A desperate attempt to do his duty gracefully, a pumped-up affection

masquerading as the genuineness of love. No, if there had been in his heart, this last troublous week, any reality of emotion at all, it had not been such as to make him regret this sudden desertion of his betrothed bride.

Vera's hand still lay in his, her wet eyes, filled with an imploring pity, were fixed on him. "Too late, too late!" she said again, in passionate regret. "I came too late, after all!"

Dick, staring at her, was scarcely conscious of her words. It seemed to him that his soul, freed suddenly from the bonds of loyalty in which he had so firmly clamped it down, had sprung up suddenly to the complete and dazzling perception of the truth. What had they meant, these wild imaginings, these vagrant, disowned yearnings of the past few days? What was it to him, this touch of the little wet hand which lay so softly in his? What had she done to him, this woman with the tender eyes and soft rain-spangled hair?

He took in a great breath. What, indeed?

He knew. His soul, released from the bonds of an artificial loyalty, faced the truth which until this moment it had lightly spurned or conscientiously thrust behind it. In spite of the bitter sorrow in which later, as he dimly realized, this immense and passionate delight must expiate itself, he was no longer afraid to face its essential meaning. He loved the woman before him.

Ever since that moment on the wind-swept salt-marshes, since the moment her little terrified hand had rested on his, one image only had obsessed his heart. Was it loyalty to Daphne, or merely a strong man's natural reluctance to yield to the grip of emotion, which even in their moonlit meeting had made him so long blind to this fact? But now, at least, he could no longer turn his back upon it. He loved Vera Bodley.

Was the splendor, the terror of it, written in his eyes for her to read? Her fingers trembled in his, and they remained staring at each other like the first man and woman in the first dawn.

For the flash of a moment, prolonged

by its own intensity to a seemingly endless duration, their two souls stood open to each other. Dick was certain of that. How, indeed, could he care with this extraordinary depth of conviction, which seemed to fuse their two souls into one through their gazing eyes—and she not care? How could they two, who during all their lives had been moving toward each other, meet at last and not know it?

In her wide-open shining eyes he read a beckoning glory, a dumb despair equal to his own. Incredible as the fact might seem, she loved him as suddenly, as finally as he loved her. And she was the wife of another man!

It was Vera who first recalled her startled soul back to itself. With lowered glance, she plucked her feverish hand from his strong clasp.

"Good night," she said. "I must—I must——"

Dick clamped his two hands at his sides. He was himself again. But a new self. The burning alchemy of that moment had stamped him with its impress. Never again would his soul be the same soul, or the world be the same world, as before that moment when Vera had lifted her eyes to his, and her soul within them.

The business of the moment was, however, very plainly that of pretending that no such moment had ever taken place. Very formally, without touching each other's hands or looking into each other's eyes, they said good night. Not another word was spoken of the faithless Daphne. Her very remembrance had passed from Dick's mind, as he turned and went out into the rain-filled night.

The momentary exaltation had died out from his heart. He was conscious only of a desperate longing, and of a hopeless solitude.

XVI.

Seated on the heathery brow of a hill, Dick Sugden asked himself for the hundredth time, what had brought him back here again to Muckledean?

Why had he come back here to this

lonely hill village, to spend the days which must intervene before his taking passage at Liverpool? Why had he chosen Muckledean, in preference to Paris or to an immediate return to New York? He knew. It was because, when he was not permitted to stay in the actual neighborhood of the woman he loved, he sought, as it were automatically, the spot endeared by association with her.

Sitting there on the hillside, he pulled out his pocketbook, and from it took a letter. For perhaps the five hundredth time in the past fortnight, he read it. It was a brief note from Lady Bodley, written in answer to a formal communication which, on the morning of what should have been his wedding-day, he had despatched to the Abbey by the hand of Samuel; before his departure from Chilham by the afternoon train, he begged permission to pay a formal visit of farewell on Sir Hamilton and Lady Bodley. Samuel, however, had brought back no answer to his request—merely a frightened and incoherent account of a norful fit or zumpin' 'at Zur 'Amilton 'ad 'ad, and the queer questions about 'is breeches, and 'er ladyship cryin' and tellin' 'im to go. Zo he coom.

A half-hour later had arrived, by the discreet hand of Nash himself, a little note in the delicate handwriting he knew so well.

Please forgive me—but will you have the goodness to leave Chilham at once? My husband knows everything, and puts upon it the construction which you may imagine. It was those tweed trousers of his own that gave him the clue—those trousers which were in my luggage in the automobile that day, and which I sent to you at Muckledean, in place of yours that were spoiled. My husband, recognizing them just now on Samuel, demanded how he came by them, and learned they were a present from you. He became suspicious. He has cross-examined me, he has cross-examined Trout, who is now his constant companion, and who, though he tried to earn his hush-money, I am bound to own, could not altogether conceal the truth. Furthermore, Hamilton has recalled an odd story related by one of the assize judges at Carlisle, which the dean told him the other day. Add to all this, that he has been drinking again—he seems to have obtained a secret supply of liquor, we know not from whom. I cannot be certain

even that he has no pistols. His condition is desperate. If you stay, I cannot answer for the consequences. I have already done enough to blight and ruin your life. I beseech you, let there not be any more!

The best that I can wish you is that you may never lay eyes on me again. But I hope that I am guilty of no sin when I say, may the dear God keep you and bless you!

There was no signature—merely the scrawled initial "V" and a tremulous postscript:

Go—go—for my sake, at once!

Dick Sugden sighed as he pressed the letter with an instant's caressing gesture to his cheek; glanced about to see that no stray grouse or rabbit had taken cognizance of the action; then refolded the document and replaced it carefully in his pocket.

That on an hour's notice he had quitted Chilham, pausing only to pack his clothes, and a few wedding-presents to be returned to their donors—this precipitate flight was something that he would not wish to have known by his old associates in Montana. Dick Sugden, who shot straight and who knew how to look a gun straight in the barrel—Dick himself to flee ignominiously before the threats and the trembling pistols of a drunken reprobate like Sir Hamilton! The thing was incredible, disgraceful, and yet, for the motive given, the one thing possible for him to do.

She had asked him to go, and he had gone. What was there, at a word from her, that he would not do?

That there was that in her heart which would make her go with him, her eyes had told him in that brief transfiguring moment when her soul had stood open to his. What, then, held him back from claiming this dear delight that belonged to him?

Conventional morality, which it was the fashion of the day to patronize, had always seemed to Dick Sugden a sane and sensible thing; and even in this black and bewildering hour, his honest respect for it did not desert him. A married woman was a woman cut off in honor from the love of all men save one. The fact that that one might have

failed in his love could not alter the obvious fact; any other man who tried to take his place with her must thereby dishonor the woman in her own eyes, in the world's, even in his own. The attempt to regularize such a situation by divorce and remarriage had always seemed to him a peculiarly repulsive "crawl." For a man to "make an honest woman" of the woman he loved, was to admit openly that he had previously made her otherwise. That Vera through him should suffer such a loss, shook him with a very sickness of repugnance that was almost like a physical nausea. In that moment he resolved that if a bullet through his brain should be the only means to preserve her from himself, then a bullet it should be.

He rose slowly to his feet. For the hundredth time in the past fortnight, he had fought out the same question to the same conclusion.

He loved her. He believed that she loved him. And that was all there was to it. Right there where it began, it stopped short. The curtain had barely risen, and the play was played out.

With slow steps, he turned and limped down the heather-clad hillside, to his inn.

Mrs. Macnaughten was glad to see him. The sorrow of his situation as she understood it, no less than a certain radiant kindliness which Dick carried with him for rich and poor alike, had won something resembling tenderness from her stern Presbyterian heart. As sympathy, even given under a misapprehension, brings comfort to an aching soul, Dick had not corrected her original belief that on that last disastrous morning, his bride had been torn from him by her remorseless guardian. Besides, to deny this impression of Mrs. Macnaughten's would be to expose Vera to the virtuous contempt which on a former occasion had threatened her. And almost it seemed to him he could see her lovely, terrified face across the table, as he sat down, on his return from his climb, to the excellent dinner that his sympathetic hostess had prepared for him.

The frizzled waitress, no less sympathetic, served his soup. Dick ate slowly, in melancholy appreciation, trying to fix his attention on the newspaper propped up before him. He had no mail; his enforced change of name forbade that. However, his business arrangements for the time of his absence were already made, and as for other communications—— He had had quite enough of letters, in that last communication of Daphne's; in the brusque, triumphant epistle which the next morning had brought him from her mother; in the perfectly undoubting self-righteousness with which they owned having taken advantage of Tom's secret attachment and Tom's sudden preference, to extricate themselves from what threatened to be an ugly hole. Well, possibly they were right; but their letters were not such as made pleasant remembrance, any more than Tom's own—that strange, pompous effusion which began with an attempt on the part of the future rector to square his own action with the rules of honor and of the creed that he professed; and ending in the honesty of a sudden human cry: "Old chap, don't be too hard on me for this. I love her so—you see, I love her so!"

Dick pushed away his empty soup-plate. How absurd, at this stage of the game, for his soul thus to play hide-and-seek with itself! What use to pretend even to himself that either Daphne or Tom had sunk in his opinion, for their happy solution of a grim and intolerable situation?

The frizzled waitress touched his elbow to attract his attention to the broiled trout. Outside, somewhere down the road, was heard the sudden hoot of a motor. Dick, helping himself to trout, turned his head languidly. What recollections did that distant horn not evoke?

"That will do, Katie," he said gently, "and now—yes, thank you, the cress——"

He applied himself to his fish. It was fresh, and exquisitely cooked. Suddenly the motor-blast which a few moments before had caught his atten-

tion sounded again as it were in his very ears. From the yard below his windows came the pounding hum of an arrested motor. Was there, after all, something oddly familiar in the horn, in the very vibration itself?

This mounting excitement, he told himself, was absurd! So, very dignified and stolid, he sat still while Katie changed the plates. But when, in quest of the next course, she had left the room he could no longer restrain his curiosity. He rose and went to the window. There in the courtyard below was a white machine that he knew.

He stood for a moment, faintly incredulous, breathlessly expectant. Yes, it was the same car, the very same. The milky paint, the shining headlamps, the angle of the tonneau, the build of the under-body, even the number which swung in full view below—there before him, glittered the identical combination of rubber and steel and polished wood, that at its every appearance had foreboded and precipitated for him some decisive change in his fate. Had this oddly chosen instrument of destiny once more come to seize upon his life?

And for what new complication of unhappiness? Was it possible, that Vera—

He turned, taking in his breath. Mrs. Macnaughten's footsteps, like those of an agitated elephant, were flying up the stairs. The next moment, without knock or warning, his door was burst open.

"Oh, Mr. Joliffe, sir—she's come back, she's come!"

Dick rose to his feet, staring. The landlady's very cap-border was bristling with the delight of her news.

"She's come!" he repeated stupidly, thrusting from his mind the only possible meaning of her words. "Who's come?"

"Wheesh!" breathed Mrs. Macnaughten. Her very skirts rustled in excitement as she turned from the door to address some one in the hall without. "This way, madam. Tods, this is a joyful occasion! This way, madam, if you please."

The door was flung ceremoniously open. The next instant Vera Bodley, in motor-coat and veil thrown back, stood upon the threshold.

Her coming, sudden and amazing though it was, was like the answer to a wish, the embodiment of a dream. Dick stood staring. Was it indeed herself in the flesh, or the mere visible projection of his yearning thought that he saw there before him?

Before he could control his startled lips to speech, Mrs. Macnaughten had seized the simpering waitress by the arm.

"And how daur ye stand there gapin' like a stuck pig?" she cried. "Canna ye see we're no wanted here?" And dragging the girl after her, she flew from the room in a sympathetic whirl of black bombazine.

Vera, as though unaware of this rather embarrassing mark of consideration, took a step forward into the room. Her face was the face which three weeks before had confronted him in this very spot—white, immovable, lit by its terror as by a pale lamp from within.

"Dick!" she said. And he saw that though her face might be the face of their first night at Muckledean, her eyes were the eyes which he had looked into on that last night of their parting. And at the sweetness of the message he read within them, he forgot even to ask the causes of her pursuing terror. Forgetful of everything else but the joy which had thus miraculously come to him, he stepped toward her with both hands outstretched.

"You've come!" he cried. "Thank God, you've come!"

She gave him her hand. As on the occasion when he had first touched it, the fingers were cold and tremulous like an autumn leaf.

"It's my husband," she breathed in incoherent explanation. "This motor trip is for his health—he's been very ill. This happens to be our first night's stop—at least, I suggested we should come here, for I never thought—Dick, forgive me for the trouble I always bring you, but go away! I beseech you, go away!"

He bowed his head. "I understand, dear," he said. "Believe me, I have no wish to add any further complication to so unhappy a situation as yours."

"But go away now!" she cried, with sudden shrillness. "Don't you understand?"

He dropped her hand, staring at her. Painful, embarrassing, even scandalous his continued presence might be. But this blanching terror? This bitter urgency?

"Since that day when he found out," she whispered, "he has sworn that he would kill you! This past fortnight he has been drinking again. How he got the whisky, Heaven knows! It has made him a madman. To-day at lunch, at Carlisle, more whisky—How? God knows! At these times he has the ingenuity of a fiend—and now he has this fixed purpose of revenge. Last night he slept with his pistols under his pillow. Dear Dick, if anything should happen to you through my fault—"

At the sweet confession made by her breaking voice, by her tender terror for his safety, all heed of the warning which they conveyed was swept from Dick's brain. This was not the first time that he had seen himself the destined quarry of an enemy with a loaded gun. It was the first time, however, that he had stood face to face with the openly confessed tenderness of the woman whom, with all the strength and passion of his newly awakened nature, he so deeply loved.

Even in this supreme moment, however, he did not forget the bonds which for her honor's sake he had laid upon himself. He stood with his arms rigid at his side, like a soldier at attention.

"Don't be afraid, dear," he heard his own voice saying, far away and a bit unsteady as in a dream. "Don't be afraid, I'll do as you say, exactly as you say."

There was a rush of heavy boots on the corridor without. The door fell open. Like the eruption of an explosion, in burst Sir Hamilton Bodley.

For a moment he stood glaring. His face was a bluish purple. The veins on his bald forehead stood out like the

twisted worm-trails on the beach-sand. There was in him not a trace of the languid, puffy individual who had welcomed Dick to Chilham, or even of the shaken creature who so pitifully had implored his guest for whisky. In the transforming passion of his murderous jealousy, he had risen suddenly to a tragic and hideous dignity.

"You're here," he said thickly, addressing Dick—"you're here, after all! Yes, I heard down-stairs—"

In a gesture familiar to Dick, he reached back.

"You thief!" said Sir Hamilton Bodley. "You thief!"

Vera uttered a little cry. Dick, leaping forward, found himself looking into the tiny dark mouth of a revolver.

"Stand back!" he said sharply to the woman.

Unheeding of his command, she sprang forward with hand outstretched toward the weapon in her husband's hand. The shot rang out. Like a dissolving pillar of water, Vera fell on the floor between the two men. On the whiteness of her blouse a red spot sprang out like a leaping tongue of flame.

"Is she dead?" asked her husband stupidly. "Is she dead?"

Dick, leaping to the assassin's side, seized the revolver which dangled from the shaking hand. With a fierce gesture he flung it through the window. The shivered glass tinkled on the paved yard beneath. The house was full of screams and flurrying footsteps.

Dick kneeled beside Vera, and lifted her in his arms. Her head fell sideways. The crawling scarlet licked the whiteness of her blouse. "Help!" he shouted. "Help!"

Sir Hamilton, his head clasped between his two hands, stooped down to peer at the prostrate shape. "She's dead," he said, "I——" He broke off as though further words refused to come. He staggered back and forth, still holding his lowered head between his hands.

The next instant Mrs. Macnaughten, with a trail of trembling dependents behind her, had swept into the room.

Before Dick could open his mouth, the landlady had comprehended the situation. She wasted no time in questions. "Tom," she said sharply, "run for Doctor Kinross—run for your life! And you, Kate, help me carry this puir leddy to her bed."

"I'll carry her," said Dick quietly, lifting the little form in his arms. The faint odor of violets, with its message of life and coquetry, struck upon him in horrible contrast to the closed eyes and dangling hands. Behind him, Sir Hamilton's unheeded feet beat out their strange tattoo upon the floor.

A moment later he had laid Vera upon her bed. Mrs. Macnaughten leaned over her with busy hands. The chambermaid sobbed in long-drawn snuffles.

"I canna juist tell," whispered Mrs. Macnaughten, "I canna juist tell till the doctor comes. Sir, will you stay with your leddy now while Kate and I——"

Dick, recalled by these words to a sense of the situation as these people saw it, and of the wrongful position which he had thus involuntarily assumed, turned to withdraw from the room. "I'll go," he said huskily, "you'll let me know——"

The end of the sentence was difficult of achievement. One thought only was in his mind: it was in the effort to save his life that Vera had risked her own. And if she had lost it——

In the room without, the beating rhythm of those staggering feet was suddenly still. An instant's silence—then a crash like the falling of a tree. Then the ring of broken dishes, the sound of incoherent cries.

Dick, coming back through the door, beheld a sprawled mass of tweed and boots and purple visage, prostrate beside the ruins of his little dinner-table.

For a moment Dick's dim senses, dulled by the horror of what he had just witnessed, by the still greater horror of the suspense under which he was laboring, scarcely gave him cognizance of what he saw. Hardly was he conscious of the sudden sight of Trout's little darting form detaching itself from the group of trembling servants at the door

and bending with clumsy attempts at relief over his prostrate master.

The sight recalled Dick to a sense of the imperative duty before him. Be it death or life that waited for him behind that closed door, he must do his best to make it life and not death on this hither side.

With a strong effort Dick kneeled beside the prostrate body. With the aid of the little chauffeur, he loosened the sick man's collar, raised his head on a pillow, and bathed the discolored forehead with water from the carafe at his hand.

The spectacled surgeon of his former acquaintance, entering hastily with his black bag in his hand, found them thus employed. Dick motioned him desperately to the inner room.

"It's not here you're wanted!" he cried, with furious urgency. "It's there, it's in there!"

Mrs. Macnaughten opened the door and the fateful form of the doctor vanished behind it. With what message would he return—life or death?

To drown the creeping horror of thought, Dick worked as though the essential joy of his earthly existence lay in reviving the worthless life beneath his hands. In the inner room there was silence. The frightened servants one by one had dropped away from the hall-door. Save for the unconscious Sir Hamilton, Dick was alone with the little chauffeur. Suddenly he was startled by a new look in the little white face thrust into his.

"I sy, gov'nor," breathed Trout hoarsely, "is she goin' to die?"

Dick shook his head. For very weariness, he had desisted his efforts. And in truth they seemed to avail very little. "I don't know, Trout," he answered gently, and listened for some sound behind that closed door.

"He shot her?" persisted Trout. "That was the wy it come about?"

Dick nodded mechanically. Trout's voice in reply was altered suddenly to tones of a grinding and hoarse regret.

"S' help me, I never thought o' that!" he said. "How would I?"

The words, enigmatic as they were,

seemed forced from the cockney by a reality of emotion which pierced even his callous and self-seeking nature.

In amazement that made him oblivious even of the gruesome task before him, Dick stared at the speaker.

Of any resultant danger to Lady Bodley, Trout had never thought. But of such a possibility, why should he think at all? And resultant of what?

Swift thought, darting through Dick's brain, drove from it for the moment the immediate pressure of his sick anxiety. Trout spoke as though, had he foreseen this catastrophe, he might have prevented it. What part then, positive or negative, had he taken in bringing it about?

Had he told? No, from another quarter altogether the disastrous disclosure had come to the jealous ears of Sir Hamilton. What then had Trout done? An odor, heavy, sickening, charged with terrible meaning, brought Dick his sudden answer to this question.

The whisky! The secret supply of whisky which Lady Bodley's best pains had been unable, even on their journey, to keep from her husband. Dick faced Trout sternly.

"It was you," he said, "who for the past weeks have been supplying your master with the liquor which——"

"I didn't, I didn't!" screamed Trout. "S' help me Gawd——"

"Hush!" said Dick sternly.

The body between them had grown very quiet. Still there was silence behind the fast-closed door. Dick's heart beat thick and painfully. Would the news never come?

When the cockney spoke again it was in a changed tone—cringing, whimpering, crafty.

"Look 'ere, Mr. Sugden, sir," he said, "if I did 'elp 'im to 'arf a drop now an' then, for the comfort of his pore soul, yn't you the last one to call me bloomin' nymes for it? 'Ang it, I'm a man with a 'art, I am. An' when I see two young things pinin', an' kep' apart from each other—blarst me, 'ow was I to know that anythink more'n *this* 'd come of it? But if she dies, pore thing——"

The door opened. With soft steps the doctor came back into the room.

Dick leaped forward. He would have spoken, but no voice came. The doctor, used to the sight of human nature in such circumstances, understood.

"Your wife will do vera well, sir," he said; "a small artery severed in the shoulder—a wee loss of blood. Otherwise——"

Dick, seizing the doctor's hand, found no words to express his thanks, far less to correct the other's mistake. Vera was alive—Vera was alive! That was all he knew. The blood went singing to his brain. He was hardly conscious of the silent form below him, or of the doctor who kneeled beside it.

"And this is the gentleman who shot her," observed the surgeon slowly. He waved back the little cockney who, with a great simulation of devotion, bathed the discolored forehead. "That's no use," the doctor said. He turned back the puffy eyelids, listened at the quiet breast.

Then his spectacles were upturned to the waiting Dick. "Sir," he said with solemn unction, as though speaking in church, "your enemy has passed from the reach of your vengeance, to answer for his crime at the bar of a higher power." Then, dropping suddenly to the practical utterance of professional facts: "Thundering apoplexy. Due to excitement. And I wad also say, to confirmed habits of alcoholeism. Tods, he reeks of it still!"

With an impatient gesture he rose to his feet. He had pronounced the epitaph of Sir Hamilton Bodley.

XVII.

Late in the following afternoon, Dick Sugden stepped wearily from the white car, which had brought him back in the rain from Tarbooth to Muckledean. The past twenty-four hours had been trying to his soul, but they had ended in success.

The body of Sir Hamilton Bodley, surrounded with due respect, had been despatched by train to lie in its ancestral

vault at Chilham. Thanks to the close-mouthed discretion of the coroner at Tarbooth, the dead man's name and rank, together with all the distressing circumstances of the affair, had been buried in official secrecy. A few interviews and a few sovereigns, judiciously disposed, had secured from the servants at Muckledean their promise to withhold details from any stray representatives of the press. However, no journalists came to pry—which caused Dick to wonder at their lack of enterprise, and to bless them. The painful affair, in fact, was in a very fair way of being hushed up.

The one sore point was the necessity of maintaining the present false position before Mrs. Macnaughten. But as the prospect of seeing Vere denounced by Presbyterian virtue and turned out on the hillside, was no more agreeable to Dick than it had been last month, he was glad to hold his tongue. After all, it was only for to-day—and was not the landlady's ready acceptance of their previously declared status, and of the dead man as the wicked guardian, a happy solution of a situation otherwise unexplainable?

One thing was clear. He must go away to-night. Vera indeed must remain for a few days longer—but for him to indulge himself in the dear delight of staying with her, would be to make too risky the thin ice over which they were skating.

So that when finally he was admitted to see her, it was with his luggage piled in the hall outside, and with the white car waiting in the drizzle below. Trout, filled with a strange contrition, won over by a final gift of hush-money, had volunteered to carry him back to Tolbooth to the train.

With beating heart, he entered the room to say good-by. From an arm-chair by the window, a little pallid face smiled at him from what seemed a cloud of whiteness. The linen pillows that propped her, the falling laces of her tea-gown—there seemed no spot of color even in her lips or in the milky reflections of her pale-brown hair. This delicate whiteness, like that of a snow-

flower, gave an unimaginable impression of purity.

Dick's voice was husky with the constraint which he put upon himself, and his effort to appear perfectly unconstrained. He sat down beside her and in a few simple words told her the day's proceedings and of the various arrangements that he had made.

She considered the situation gravely, but with no pretense of grief. "Poor Hamilton—when I first met him, he was very kind," she said, and sighed.

Dick's eyes, resting on the bandages that bound her left arm stiffly to her side, strove sincerely to emulate her sweet compassion for the dead man. He found it an easier task, however, to dismiss him from his mind. So he passed to a subject of more vital interest—Vera's health, and her prospects for leaving Muckledean.

The shoulder was progressing famously, she assured him. In two or three days, the surgeon promised, she would be able to return home to Chilham. To be sure the heir presumptive, a far-off cousin of Sir Hamilton's, would be taking possession—but then, she would visit the bride and groom at the rectory. She glanced at Dick—his face was immovable. After that, she continued, she planned to spend the winter in France with some distant relatives of her own. And Dick was going back to America next Saturday? She wished him a pleasant voyage, and all good luck on his return.

Dick sat looking at her in silence, while the moments of their allotted time drew toward their end. What kept him silent? Her new bereavement, her soft defenselessness, like that of a broken flower—or perhaps their strange isolation, their utter removal from all the other human beings who formerly had surrounded them and held them apart. Mrs. Medlycott, Tom Codrington, Daphne, Sir Hamilton, all were gone. Face to face, Dick and Vera sat and looked at each other. And not a word was spoken.

Mrs. Macnaughten's tap upon the door roused them from their wordless dream.

"Juist a wurrud, sir, to warn you that it's sax o'clock, and if you want to get that seven o'clock train frae Tolbooth——" With sudden severity she turned to Vera. "Though how ony husband can be leaving his young wife at sic a time as this, Mrs. Joliffe—awee! Business is business, thae days. Will ye be comin' sune, sir?"

Dick did not answer. With a sympathetic smile, the kind-hearted woman withdrew from the room. Dick did not see her go. He did not even perceive the sudden burning flush which her words had called up on the face before him, rosy against the whiteness of its pillows. His eyes were fixed inward, on a blazing, tumultuous, transfiguring thought.

"Vera," he said, and his voice shook. "Shall we call her back? Shall we tell her that what she thinks is not so? There's still time, perhaps—shall we call her back?"

Vera stared at him. In her large eyes there was wonder, yet confidence as well. "What do you mean, Dick?" she asked in a low voice.

"Don't you remember?" His voice stumbled over the words, but this was no time for hesitation. "Don't you remember where we are, Vera? Don't you remember what it means, in this part of the country, for two persons to represent themselves before witnesses as husband and wife?"

Her face blazed to a crimson that was almost painful. "I remember something that you said about it, yes. And, yesterday, I ought to have explained the mistake to Mrs. Macnaughten. But I was so ill—and to-day it seemed too late. And then you know you told me, it amounted to nothing, after all!"

He stooped down toward her. His eyes were on hers—chaining them, compelling the tenderness which lay behind them, till it stood confessed like the sun-opened heart of a rose. "Don't you understand, dear?" he breathed slowly. "That first time, the Scotch law had no binding force over us because—because you were not a free woman then. But now——"

She took in a little sharp breath, but

her eyes never wavered from his. On neither side was there any need of doubt, or the pretense of scruple or of regret. Not only by the caprice of an ancient law were they united, but by the transfusing radiance of a common joy.

"I am your wife?" asked Vera, beneath her breath.

For an answer Dick's brain shot back to the time when he had bowed in anguish beneath the bonds which now linked him to a certain hope of heaven.

"By the grace of Sir Wickham Flynt, the Court of Session and the House of Lords, yes!" he cried, in sudden fierce claiming of his own.

Then, still watched by her awestruck, smiling eyes, he turned with a sudden swift impulse to his pocketbook. From an inner compartment he took a plain gold ring—the same ring which, in his former visit to this place, he had picked up with his crutch from his bedroom floor. Then, with tender touch he took the little left hand that protruded stiffly from its bandages. Softly he drew off the diamond cluster, then the wedding-ring beneath.

"May I, dear?" he asked her gently. She nodded; and the whole transfiguring joy of her love was in her eyes.

He crossed to the toilet-table, and dropped the two rings which he had removed, into a silver box which stood open. Coming back, he knelt beside Vera. All around them was very still, but for the faint drip of moisture from the eaves without. As he looked into Vera's eyes he saw that they were bright with the transparency of tears.

"I don't deserve it," she said in a little passionate whisper. "I sinned against you, my dearest. I sinned against my husband. And here is my reward: you! The dear God has been very good to me."

Very gently Dick again took the little soft hand. With careful fingers he slipped the golden circlet upon it.

"My wife," he said passionately. "Vera, my wife!"

The odor of violets seemed all about him as he knelt beside her. The brightness of her eyes dazzled him. Yet in

her recent bereavement, as in her broken strength, she seemed sacred from the arms that yearned to encircle her sweetness. Very gently, as he might touch a snow-flower, he took her soft face between his two hands.

"Wait a moment," she whispered. "Wait, Dick, you haven't told me yet—do you love me?"

He was silent. His eyes were fixed on hers. And she laughed aloud in pure delight at the answer she read in them.

"You'll come back, Dick? For I suppose we must wait. Dick, you see, we must wait?"

"For your sake, dear, I'll go away and leave you. Don't think I'm the kind of cad to insist on hanging around, risking a scandal on your dear name. It's like being shot to leave you. I don't mind owning that. But I'm going off to leave you—*now*."

Her warm cheek caressed his palm, and she felt the tense stiffening of his fingers. "Yes, it's like yourself, Dick, to think for me, to take care of me, even if I have to lose you for a little while. But you'll come back and take me to America, dear—when?"

"When you let me come back. That very instant!"

"Next year?" She considered the question, while her breath came short. "It wouldn't look well, before a year's time. Yes, in decency a woman has to wait a year before she marries again. Dick, that's what we'll have to do! We'll have to get married again!"

He nodded. "Certainly—the more the merrier! But just the same, from this time forth, with all the binding force of the law that unites us, you are mine—mine, Vera, mine!"

"More than that, Dick," she whispered suddenly, and her warm breath fluttered on his cheek. "I'm your wife—yes, Dick, by this strange old law. But in law, I've been a wife before." She felt his faint involuntary gesture of repulsion at the thought. "That's what I want to tell you, dear," she cried exultantly, "for in my heart, in my soul, in the part of me that's really *me*—never, never anybody's wife but yours! Not even a living woman, dearest, it

seems to me now, till that night I sat here at dinner with you, and this hand of mine went out to yours almost without my knowing it; and you were so kind, so chivalrous, so— Oh, how shall I say it? I can't tell what you seemed to me. I only know, I struggled like the lost against the deadly sin of that thought. And now I don't need to struggle any more—dear God in Heaven, why have you been so good to me? I don't need to struggle any more! I can love you all I want to! Only a year to wait, one little year! Dear Dick, how good I'll try to be to you—how dearly I will love you!"

With a little tender movement like that of a child, she nestled toward him. His hands slid gently to her shoulders, and the warm softness of her lips lay for the first time against his. All about them, the house was very still.

Suddenly the tread of heavy feet—the warning tap upon the door. "Mr. Joliffe, sir?"

For a moment he hesitated, for she was very dear. Then, with a quick wrenching pang, he started to his feet. "What's the use, Vera? I've got to go. I might as well go now!"

He heard a little sobbing breath that tore his heart as a mother's heart is torn by the cry of the child she is forced to leave. But the eyes that Vera raised to him were bright not only with her tears but with her courage.

"Good-by, Dick. Remember, I'll be waiting for you!"

"Good-by, Vera. You'll write me every day?"

"Every day!" Her voice faltered and broke. Moved by a sudden irresistible impulse, Dick turned back. Stooping down, he kissed the smooth whiteness that had been his first sight of her—the little tender triangle of throat just below the ear.

A few moments later, he stepped into the waiting automobile. The drizzle was still falling, but the evening sun was breaking through. The valley was a shimmering confusion of mists and sunlit rain and half-hid looming hills. While over all hung the jeweled arch of a rainbow.

ADVENTUROUS EVADNE

By Mrs. Wilson Woodrow



It was nearing five o'clock of a winter afternoon, and New York was fast losing the bright, hard dominance of her daylight splendor. This was the hour when she hid herself in wistful, faint, unsubstantial hazes, and withdrew from the gaze of her multitudes for a season before decking herself for the night in the gaudy jewels of her million lights.

Through this dying and poetic light Evadne moved, a little languidly, it is true, and apparently without definite aim. Suddenly, her rather roving attention was caught by the long line of motor-cars and carriages which stretched up and down each side of the street, and her eye was further arrested by a gaily striped canopy across the way, a canopy which ran down from the stately entrance of a handsome house to the curb, over a strip of red velvet rug. Behind this, the house itself loomed, huge, gray and imposing.

"Ah, Mrs. Wyburton's tea!" She paused a moment, as if in hesitation, glanced down at her black velvet gown and trim shoes, drew one delicately gloved hand from her muff to straighten the black fur toque on her fair hair, adjusted anew the gardenia in her coat, and moved leisurely across the street. As she ascended the steps, a man, dark, of distinguished appearance, with graying hair and a worn face, hastened from the door.

His harassed gaze, with its suggestion of sleepless nights, fell upon Evadne for the fraction of a second indifferently, and then the preoccupation vanished, and interest, keen and almost startled,

took its place. At the foot of the steps he paused and glanced back irresolutely, as if he contemplated returning. Then he shrugged his shoulders and walked hastily on, presently to be lost in the growing shadows.

As for Evadne, she moved on into an atmosphere of warmth and light and fragrance and color. The splendid rooms were full of flower-scents mingled with delicate perfumes shaken from fans and handkerchiefs of luxurious women, and the music of stringed instruments mingled with the shrill airy treble of women's voices, sustained and occasionally broken by the deeper masculine tones.

Skilfully enough, as if from long practise, Evadne Miller threaded her way through the various groups until she reached her hostess, a blond and rather faded beauty of the piquant type. Her newly arrived guest took her hand, smiled into her eyes, the familiar intimate smile of an old friend, and passed on.

Leisurely, yet somewhat absorbedly, Evadne now made her way through the throng, her glance always searching ahead as if in quest of some particular person or thing. Presently, she reached the dining-room, and after a word to a waiter, sought an untenanted window-seat with several shielding palms before it.

As she sat behind her very effectual screen, sipping the tea which the waiter had brought her, she did not fail to notice that the rooms were gradually thinning, and the music, but lately almost inaudible above the voices, was now very distinct. Hastily, she drained her cup and stretched out her hand for her muff, when there was a rustle of the

palm-screen and Mrs. Wyburton, flushed, uneasy, showing manifest trepidation, stood before her.

"Ah," she sighed, "the detective said I should find you here; but I was afraid you might have slipped away in the crowd. Well"—attempting sternness but achieving only a placating timidity—"what have you to say for yourself?"

"One word," said Evadne, with her charming smile, a smile which revealed new and lovely curves of her mouth and deepened the sweetness of her sapphire eyes. "Thanks. Thank you so much for your nice, warm house. I assure you it has proved very comfortable after, what is literally, my freezing garret. Thank you still more for the delicious tea, for when one has neglected to eat what is vulgarly known as a square meal for several days, why, fluffy things and champagne and tea are extremely palatable."

"You poor dear!" in impulsive sympathy. "But"—checking herself and drawing back in bewildered hauteur—"why do you speak so? Are you not well paid? Do you not have a good salary?"

It was Evadne who now looked puzzled. "A salary?" she exclaimed. "I! I wouldn't know what to do with such a thing. How on earth do you expect a miniature-painter to have a salary?"

"A miniature-painter! Are you not a reporter? The detective was sure of it. You rather fooled me at first, the way you spoke to me. I was convinced that you were some one I should know quite well; but when the detective whispered his suspicions, I became as nervous as if you were an anarchist, expecting you to snap-shot me, you know, from a camera concealed in your muff or your pompadour, or up your sleeve."

Evadne's laughter was as delicious as her smile. "A reporter! Oh, dear me, no! I wish I were. They do not, according to statistics, starve as frequently and picturesquely as artists."

"A miniature-painter!" Mrs. Wyburton looked at her unbidden guest, cogitatively, speculatively, half-incredulously.

"Oh, quite! Wait, I will show you my credentials." She opened her card-case and searched for a professional card.

"But hungry!" murmured Clara Wyburton, with puckered brows. "Pardon me, you don't look as if you had even a bowing acquaintance with any one who ever knew what it was to be hungry."

"I hope not." Again Evadne's laughter rang out. "Dear lady, in my profession I must make a noise like success; it is the first rule of the game. It is, by the way, a game I am rather new at; but it has gone well enough until this winter. When the rich begin to economize, having their miniatures painted is the first necessity they strike off the list. But since you have asked me these various questions about myself, may I, in turn, ask one of you? Why have you taken these precautions against the intrusion of reporters, and why are you in your very apparent dread of them?"

The lady looked at her strangely and sighed heavily. "Why not?" she asked, with manifest agitation of voice and manner. "Why not, when a particularly unpleasant notoriety threatens me and mine? Wait!" She leaned forward, a sudden decision in her voice. "I will tell you the whole story. My husband," with a nervous laugh, "is always accusing me of being utterly indiscreet, but I have found that it is often better to trust to one's intuitions than to be guided by the wisdom of other people. You—you are evidently a person of resource, of cool head, and I must, must confide in some one. The detective's advice, which I have followed, has come to nothing; my husband is so divided between disgust and laughter over the whole affair that he will take no part in it, and I can do no more; it is too late to do anything more. Oh, I have stood and smiled all afternoon with a breaking heart, and I shall have to sit and smile all evening with a completely shattered one, for we are giving a large dinner this evening."

She paused a moment, evidently overcome by bitter recollections, and carefully dabbed her eyes with her hand-

kerchief in order not to disturb the powder on her cheeks.

"You have heard of my brother, Alfred Cowen, have you not?" she asked abruptly.

Evadne thought a moment. "His name is certainly familiar to me," she replied slowly, "but I cannot tell when or where I have heard it."

"You must have seen it often in the papers," returned his sister. "He is a well-known amateur chess-player, always in some tournament or other, and besides, he is a great traveler; but when he is in town, he has an apartment at the Eurydice. For the rest, he is an agreeable man approaching middle age, dark and rather distinguished-looking."

Evadne's thoughts reverted quickly to the man she had met on the steps.

"He was here earlier in the afternoon," continued Mrs. Wyburton; "an almost unprecedented thing for him to appear at a tea, for he is devoted to his special pursuits and little given to social life; but he came at my request in order to quell this gossip about the breach between himself and me. Ordinarily the most reasonable of men, there is an odd strain of recklessness and obstinacy in him which occasionally crops out."

"Now it happens, that about a week ago, he went to a dinner, rather Bohemian, I fancy, and sat next an actress, Adèle von Aden, leading lady for Houghton, in 'All for Love'. During the course of the dinner, the minx"—Mrs. Wyburton spoke vehemently—"stated that when she appeared as a court lady, in the second act, she had to deck herself with stage jewels, and she had a theory that these had a definite effect on her acting. She was also absolutely convinced, she assured him, that if, for once, she could wear real jewels, as priceless as the stage paste purported to be, her reading of the part would be immeasurably improved, in fact, electrified."

"Alfred, in what he claims to be a spirit of psychological experiment, but what was probably the spirit of champagne, immediately offered her—the Cowen pearls!" She dropped her voice

to a note of tragedy. Then, catching sight of Evadne's uncomprehending face: "That doesn't mean anything especial to you, does it? But the Cowen pearls are famous. My mother, one of the proudest women imaginable—this would kill her—wore them until the day of her death, and then stupidly and most unjustly left them to Alfred; but he has always allowed me to wear them and I feel as if they were my own; people naturally associate them with me."

"And now, that creature no sooner secured Alfred's promise than she began to make capital of it. She has had her press-agent busy; the papers have been full of hints and insinuations, the house will be crowded to-night, principally with our friends, of course, to see her—that scheming adventuress—flaunt the Cowen pearls."

"Oh!" Mrs. Wyburton's tears were now unrestrained. "It is too, too dreadful! And I have to send the pearls to him before seven o'clock this evening. I refused, of course, at first; but he made some horrid threats about replevining them, whatever that may be. And what am I going to do? I cannot take them myself because of this tiresome dinner; and, also, because we might have another scene which would lead to an irreconcilable breach between us. We have already had more than one unpleasant, almost violent interview. I hate to send them by the detective, for that is virtually the end of the matter; but"—laying her hand over Evadne's and speaking earnestly, almost imploringly—"you are young, charming, resourceful—who knows? You may succeed in persuading him where all have failed. At any rate, wild as the idea may be, I am impelled to beg you to take the pearls to my brother. There may be an opportunity—" She broke off forlornly.

"The idea is absurd," said Evadne slowly. "You are merely catching at straws. Your brother would justly resent any interference in so delicate a matter from a stranger like myself. And yet, so oddly have events arranged themselves that I am tempted to go on with the adventure." She thought deep-

ly a moment, eyes on the floor. "What hour is it now?" she asked suddenly, lifting her head.

"It is a quarter to six," returned Mrs. Wyburton promptly, glancing at a tiny jeweled watch, "and the pearls must be in Alfred's hands by seven."

Evadne scarcely heard her. She was again absorbed in thought, the firm set of her lips, the far-away look in her eyes showed that every faculty was concentrated on the subject in hand.

At last she spoke decisively, in crisp, brief sentences: "You must send the detective with me. He must wait about the hotel until I am ready to return. That is for my own protection since I bear the pearls. Next, would I, a stranger, be permitted to go to your brother's apartment? Let me see. How would we get around that? Ah, I have it! I will go in your brougham or motor; wear your clothes." She scanned her hostess from head to foot. "We are about the same height and figure. Your hair is almost the same color as mine. Good!"

"Oh, what a clever idea!" The mercurial Mrs. Wyburton clapped her hands joyously. "Come!" dragging at Evadne's sleeve. "Come at once to my room. Everything that I have is at your disposal. Hurry!"

Together they hastened through the now empty rooms, up the stairs and into Mrs. Wyburton's apartment, a large and beautiful chamber decorated entirely in pink with delicate encrustations of silver. The light fell from silver sconces through shades like crushed rose-leaves, and tall mirrors reflected the real roses which shed their fragrance from slender silver vases. Evadne stood still, looking about her in frank admiration; but her companion, possessed of a feverish activity, began drawing gowns of all descriptions from closets and clothes-presses until they bid fair to overflow all the available furniture.

"Oh, stop," protested Evadne, laughing in spite of herself. "You are making my choice too difficult. Wait, I will wear black, a black dinner-gown. Here, this is exactly the thing."

She held up a chiffon and lace creation of a complex and Parisian simplicity. It was the work of a very few moments to slip out of her own frock and into the black gauzes which transformed her from an afternoon-tea-girl into a radiant dinner-lady.

"Dear me!" gasped Mrs. Wyburton, after she had fastened the final hook and stood off a few paces the better to observe the result. "How perfectly sweet you look! Like peaches and cream in a ruffle of black chiffon. What shoulders! What a throat! How lovely not to have reached the dog-collar age. Here!" Sighing heavily, she unlocked a box and lifted out a black leather case. "Here are the pearls!" She snapped the catch, and as the lid flew back revealing the contents, she wept afresh.

Evadne gave a low, peculiar cry. It is unmistakable and untranslatable. It is the same to-day, in the Twentieth Century, as it was yesterday in the Stone Age—an odd inarticulate croon, low, rapturous, possessive; and man, now as then, interprets it as a command: "I want them. If you love me get them for me."

"Aren't they lovely?" sobbed Mrs. Wyburton.

"You poor darling!" Evadne threw a protecting arm about Clara's bowed shoulders, and spoke in tenderest, most commiserating sympathy.

"Take them," said Mrs. Wyburton, holding the box at arm's length. "If I look at them any more I shall be a red-eyed fright at dinner."

It was sometimes said of Evadne Miller that her fertility of resource approached the uncanny; but this was a superficial and erring estimate. This so-called diabolism of cleverness really lay in her ability to see at once the possibilities of a situation, and grasp them all in one handful instead of attempting to cull them blossom by blossom.

She looked Mrs. Wyburton squarely in the eye. "It would not be safe to carry the pearls in my hand," she said, with the decision of a Napoleon. "I might drop them or they might be snatched from me. I had better wear

them." She lifted a long rope of the milky, gleaming things and threw it over her shoulders, and as the cool satin surfaces touched warm, palpitating satin surfaces she shivered slightly with pleasure.

"Oh-h!" cried Clara Wyburton. Then, with heroic magnanimity: "It does take youth to wear pearls. Bend down so that I can put these stars in your hair. Now let me fasten this stomacher, now the cabochon on your shoulder. Stretch out your fingers for the rings. Oh!" stepping back and clasping her hands enthusiastically. "Just look at yourself in that long mirror. Poor Alfred!" There was a note of triumph in her commiseration.

Evadne retained a superb composure even while scanning her unparalleled image. The only signs of agitation she exhibited, if indeed they might be called signs of that emotion, were a slight deepening of the rose on her cheek and a more starry luster of the eyes.

"Now, here is my big black hat and an eminently concealing veil and my sable wrap." Clara Wyburton cast the furs about the girl's shoulders, and again Evadne shivered pleasurably. "And my muff. You dear! No one could tell us apart. Now hasten."

Evadne picked up the muff and pulled down her veil. "Wait a moment," she said as they went down the stairs together. "You move more quickly than I, and you speak with a slight lisp. Yes."

At the foot of the stairs, Mrs. Wyburton drew aside the detective who loitered about the hall awaiting them, and murmured a few words to him. Seizing coat and hat, he turned and followed Evadne through the hall and out into the clear, frosty night—a night of stars. The motor stood before the door, the lamps throwing great fans of white light on the asphalt before them.

The lady in sables and plumes and trailing chiffon paused with foot on the step.

"To the Eurydice," she lisped to the chauffeur.

"Yes, Mrs. Wyburton," he answered.

The detective sprang in beside him, he turned the machine, and they were off. Up through the park they drove; the air was delicious, like wine, and Evadne drew in great drafts of it.

"If this be I," she murmured as they whizzed past the bare and leafless trees, and she caught the reflection of the frozen lake cold and gray, as dim silver, under the winter sky. Presently they turned west toward the lights that sparkled along the river, and stopped before one of the huge piles of stone—an apartment hotel with every window alight. The detective sprang down, held the door open, and Evadne swept through the palm-lined, scarlet and gold and white hall, and into the elevator.

"Mr. Cowen's apartment," she said to the boy.

"End of the hall," he droned, stopping the elevator.

Following his directions, Evadne swept down the hall and touched a bell. Almost immediately it was answered by a man servant.

"Is Mr. Cowen in?" she asked, with a slight, impulsive movement forward.

"Yes, Mrs. Wyburton, he is just finishing dressing. I will tell him that you are here."

He preceded her down a narrow passage, drew aside a portière, and she entered a large and pleasant room; neither a drawing-room, library nor den, but an agreeable combination of all of them.

Evadne threw her hat and wraps over a chair, and then gazed eagerly about her. She presented a curious picture as she waited there. Although she stood motionless, she became all at once vitally, vibrantly alive to her fingertips. It was as if she absorbed impressions through her very pores. To certain natures of rare and keen intuition, there are no secrets; the walls talk, the furniture gossips, the ornaments prattle.

Evadne's eyes were glancing about like lightning. It almost seemed as if her delicate nostrils expanded and contracted, and why not? The room was

full of fresh air, the fragrance of American-beauty roses, and the faint aroma of excellent tobacco. The walls were of a warm, deep brown which formed an admirable background for some good landscapes. There were books, comfortable chairs, one or two tables covered with papers and magazines. A wood fire burned cheerily on the hearth, and the light fell pleasantly through softly tinted shades.

Without altering her position, Evadne tabulated the result of her impressions on her fingers:

"Dignified, essentially masculine, reserved; his aura all in sober, sedate hues, enlivened by that scarlet streak of recklessness." She laughed softly. "I like him! I like him!"

It was, perhaps, ten minutes after her arrival before Cowen stood in the doorway. Then he started violently, for opposite him, bending over the chess-table, moving the men about with practised fingers, was the tall, fair, lovely girl he had met upon his sister's door-step that afternoon—and in the Cowen pearls! He felt like rubbing his eyes. This was a dream surely, or if not, some enchanting optical illusion; but he was man enough to give even an optical illusion, such an one as this at any rate, the benefit of the doubt and to approach it with the proper conventionalities.

"I beg your pardon," he cried, advancing toward the vision. "I understood that my sister was here."

"Merely her outer semblance," she replied, pointing to the wraps on the chair, and speaking with a suspicion of laughter in her voice. "But let me hasten to explain. I come from your sister—a sort of envoy extraordinary, you know, bringing you the pearls." She lightly indicated them.

"Ah!" There was a revealing emphasis in his voice; he knew his sister, and immediately scented collusion, perhaps conspiracy. A frown, the mulish, harassed frown of the victim of much recent, feminine argument contracted his brow. "Thank you very much," he said coldly, "although I am surprised that my sister—but that is immaterial." Then, seeing that she made no move to

give him the jewels, he extended his hand. "I will relieve you of the responsibility of them now. I fear I have already detained you far too long." He glanced pointedly at the sable cape and befeathered hat.

For answer, she tranquilly seated herself, entrenching herself behind the chess-table.

"Yes," she said absently. "Yes, of course. But one moment. I have been putting in my evenings lately trying to work out this problem. Look! Night after night, no matter how I attempt to vary the play I come up against the same dead wall. But as I stood waiting for you, three new moves flashed into my mind which I am convinced are the key to the situation." Her hand hovered over the board.

"Wait a minute! Wait a minute!" he cried. "Don't move; I want to get the original positions in mind. By Jove, that is a corker!" He thrust his hands deep in his trousers' pockets, and studied the board, his jaw thrust forward, his eyes bulging. After a bit, he drew one hand slowly from his pocket, stretched it cautiously above the board, let it remain poised a moment and then withdrew it. He smiled at Evadne rather shamefacedly. "At first blush it looked simple," he said. "The pawn first and then the queen."

"That is the way I worked it out," she answered, "but it is obviously erroneous."

He said nothing but continued studying the board. Presently he put a hand behind him, feeling for a chair, seized one, and drawing it to him, sat down, never for one instant taking his eyes from the board.

The minutes ticked slowly by. Occasionally a burning log on the hearth fell apart and sent up a shower of sparks, and now and again the clock struck a musical chime; but though Evadne shrank at every sound, Cowen sat motionless, hearing nothing, seeing nothing but the board before him, every faculty absorbed in profound concentration.

"There!" he cried at last. "There we have it!" He laughed at her with the pleased and exultant excitement of

a boy. "That is one of the prettiest problems I ever saw." Then his whole face changed, he glanced at the clock, and sprang to his feet. "Good Heavens!" in horror-stricken tones. "Good Heavens! It is eleven o'clock!" His cheek paled, there was a quick, violent flash of the eye. "You and my sister may congratulate yourselves," he said, with ironical and biting courtesy. "Your little conspiracy has proved quite successful. You must consider me easier than either of you dared hope in your most sanguine moments."

She lifted her head and looked at him. There was a grieved droop to her mouth, reproach in her blue eyes.

"I don't quite understand," she said gently.

"No, I dare say not," with infinite sarcasm. Then, as her unwavering, plaintive, guileless glance still met his: "I wonder," he mused. "I—I may have been hasty." He spoke in testy apology, a dark red flush mounting his cheek. "But under any circumstances, I am ruined, undone. However, I must do the best I can now, and there is no use in further discussion of the matter. If you will give me the pearls, I will take a motor and do what is yet possible."

She made a motion as if to unclasp the jewels from about her throat, and then stayed her hand.

"Perhaps"—she hesitated slightly—"you will resent any suggestion from me under the circumstances. Nevertheless, since I am, as you consider, responsible for the embarrassing situation in which you find yourself, I will hazard one. You will," she continued, pointing to the clock, "gain nothing by taking the pearls to the theater, for that, I take it, is your destination, nor yet to Miss von Aden's home, for she will be at neither place."

"What on earth do you mean?" he asked, pausing in his hurried pacing of the floor to throw a suspicious but lingering glance upon her.

"I mean," calmly, "that Miss von Aden will be here within half an hour, and further, you will have another visitor—your sister."

"How the deuce do you know all this?" stopping short before her. "Is there some game set up among you women?"

She smiled and shook her head. "None that I know of."

"Then what authority have you for making such a statement? Are you a mind-reader?"

She laughed outright now. "I make no such pretensions; but just the same, I affirm positively that Miss von Aden and your sister will both be here within the half-hour."

"I am very stupid," he said in tones of calm desperation, "but would you mind explaining to me just how you know?"

"Because I know women."

"Ah! You seem very sure, at any rate. Well, we will see. I will wait the half-hour."

He continued to regard her meditatively, his expression gradually softening and brightening. "I never quite realized before," breaking the silence at last, "that pearls belong to youth. They give and take luster and radiance. Will you tell me your name," he asked gently, almost diffidently.

"Evadne—Evadne Miller," she replied.

"Evadne! Evadne!" he repeated. "Tell me," he asked earnestly, "do you remember meeting me on my sister's steps this afternoon?"

She nodded an affirmative.

"Yes," he leaned an arm upon the table and his chin upon his hand, "we looked into each other's eyes for a moment, and then I went down the steps and through the streets with no idea of my destination. Ah," smiling, "you are not scheming and cold and hard. Why, your lips are laughter and your eyes are love." He leaned forward, both arms crossed on the little table between them, and spoke with a certain deliberation and intensity: "I have lived long enough to know that Fate comes to us in strange and unexpected guises, and to-day, when I thought myself of all men the most miserable, because I had put myself in the position of a callow fool, had allowed myself to

be used as a pawn in the triumphant professional advancement of a clever woman; to-day, when I was raw and sore and unhappy, disgusted with myself, defiant, yet knowing there was nothing for me to do but continue to play the game, trying to carry off with some show of dignity a situation which nauseated me—why, then, then, I met Fate on a wind-swept door-step. She looked into my eyes and stirred my miserable heart-strings, and sent me reeling down the street.

"Again, she came to me to-night in the guise of a lovely woman, a tea-rose of a woman. A tea-rose with a comprehensive knowledge of chess. Fancy!" His tone was positively awed.

For once Evadne's composure deserted her. "I—I must go now," she faltered, rising. She strove resolutely this time to unclasp the pearls; but Cowen gently withdrew her hands from the obdurate clasp, and held them warmly, closely in his.

"No, no," he urged. "Surely you would not condemn them to the Black Maria of their case after having lain against your heart? I beg you to stay a little. Stay, if just to verify your predictions. Evadne, how can I let you go? You weave enchantments. Why," with ardor in his tones, "my rooms, no matter what I do to them, always seem cold and barren and desolate; and now, since you have been here, they are filled with light and warmth and color. Evadne——"

There was the sound of the opening and the shutting of an outer door, the quick tap of heels, the rustle of silken skirts. Then the portière was so quickly drawn that the brass rings from which it hung jingled together and rattled like castanets; and Miss von Aden stood in the doorway.

She was small, not nearly so tall as Evadne, and dark as Egypt. Her long, pale coat, rippling with lace and encrusted with jeweled trimmings, fell about her in graceful folds; and above a stole of ermine peered her small, mobile face. Her delicate nose had an aquiline and avaricious curve, and in her great dark eyes were the languors

and greed of the Orient. From the dull and dingy chrysalis of East Side poverty, she had soared a spangled and iridescent butterfly with a pretty and luxurious taste for the last new thing in wings.

Her glance of flaming scorn fell harmless from Evadne to scorch Cowen. "So that's the way you keep your promises! Promised me on your honor as a gentleman that I should wear the Cowen pearls to-night and then made a fool of me; went and made me the laughing-stock of the whole profession! I suppose she put you up to it—trust a woman for that! I know their games."

"It was the game and not the lady that should have the blame," said Cowen, with a bitter smile. "There, Adèle," pointing to the chess-board, "is my excuse and my confession. I assure you ——"

"What's that?" cried Adèle sharply.

Again there was a silken rustle of skirts down the hall. Again the curtain was withdrawn, and Mrs. Wyburton stood on the threshold.

"Why, what is this?" glancing from one to the other of the group. "You are still here!" she exclaimed, turning to Evadne. "And still wearing the pearls!" There was surprise in her tone, a slight disfavor in her eye.

"Yes, she's got them," said Adèle, with a mocking laugh, "and that welcher promised me at a little dinner, given not a week ago, that I should wear them to-night. Of course, my press-agent made capital of it, and the house was crowded to the doors. He"—pointing to Cowen—"was to bring them to me himself, and I was to wear them during the second act. Well, he never came, and me with a heart like a stone. I can't face my press-agent, and I don't dare face my friends. Oh, if he'd only hit me any other way! I always say," beginning to sob convulsively, "I always say: 'Treat me as you please, and I won't resent it; but the moment you wound my professional pride, the moment you strike at me as an artist, I'm all in.' I can't bear it. I ain't got the nervous organization to bear it. I'm all in." She threw her-

self in a heap on a leather couch and buried her face in the pillows, her slight figure shaken by loud and tempestuous weeping.

"Poor thing!" Mrs. Wyburton knelt beside her and patted her shoulders. "There, there, dear, don't cry. Alfred"—she spoke with some exasperation—"I really think you might have shown more tact in managing this very delicate matter. It looks to me as if it had been badly bungled." She cast a swift, faintly resentful glance from Evadne, who sat placid and pearl-decked, to her sables upon the chair.

"Oh, my dear!" in sudden alarm.

"Oh, oh, oh!" wailed Adèle. "The laughing-stock of the profession! Those cats! I can hear them now!" She ran a crescendo of piercing laughter and smothered cries.

"How dreadful!" Mrs. Wyburton's face had paled. "Alfred, do something. Get whisky—her hands are like ice—a physician——"

"What shall I do?" Cowen appealed desperately to Evadne.

"I have heard," she answered, "that there is but one cure for theatrical hysterics—a check."

His brow cleared. Mrs. Wyburton grasped buoyantly at the suggestion. "There, there, did you hear that?" she asked, bending above Adèle. "Do be quiet, and my brother shall write you a nice check. See, he is getting his book and his fountain pen."

Adèle's wild laughter died away, although her sobs continued, as Cowen wrote a figure on a slip of paper and placed it in her hand. She barely glanced at it and then shook her head, and began to wail afresh with more than a hint of her former laughter in her cries.

Cowen took the bit of paper, frowned a moment over it, added another figure or two and passed it back. "That is all," he said decisively.

She studied the figures and ceased to weep. Then she sat up smiling faintly, and sipped some brandy.

Mrs. Wyburton rose to her feet. "I really must go. Perhaps you will ac-

company me," with a chilly nod to Evadne. "And, Alfred, if you will put the pearls in the case, I will take them with me."

"No, Clara," he said, smiling, "I think not. You are too apt to regard possession as ten points of the law."

"But——" She drew herself up haughtily, offended.

"Ah, dear Clara," cried Cowen, as he saw Evadne preparing to depart, "help me to persuade her to wear the pearls always, to take them—with me. You know her; plead for me. Opportunity, Fate does not knock too often at any man's door. I dare not let her vanish into the night. Look at her!" But Evadne had covered her face with her hands. "I love her. She is the only woman I ever have loved or ever shall love. And, Clara, she plays a really great game of chess."

Adèle had sat listening with brightening eyes, and now she stole to Evadne's side and threw her arm about her waist. "Ah, listen to him," she urged. "Go on, he's an awfully good fellow really; and then think of these!" She lifted the pearls from the table where Evadne had laid them. "And," coaxingly, "you want to look at what it would do for me." She clapped her hands in sudden inspiration. "Oh, my patience! I guess my press-agent would open his eyes. Adèle von Aden and Mrs. Frederick Wyburton, witnesses at the midnight wedding, at the Little Church Around the Corner, of Mr. Alfred Cowen and——" I don't know your name!"

"Adèle! You angel. You get another figure on that check!" gasped Cowen. "Clara! Evadne!"

"Oh!" Evadne shrank back and again covered her face with her hands. Her shoulders, and her throat, even her ears were scarlet.

"Evadne! Evadne!" pleaded Alfred. "Why not? Those who fight Fate merely waste their strength. Ah, Clara, speak for me."

Mrs. Wyburton laid her hands on the girl's shoulders and gave her a little shake; "You really ought to think of it, Evadne. You are more becoming to

the pearls than any woman I ever saw. And then, we need your brains in the family. Alfred and I are both so impulsive."

"Look at me, Evadne," prayed Cowen, taking her hands and drawing her away from the embrace of the two women. "Look at me."

And Evadne withdrew her shielding hands and lifted her gaze to his. For a long minute they looked at each other, and then Cowen bent forward and kissed first the lips that were laughter and then the eyes that were love.

"Isn't it dear?" cooed Adèle on Mrs. Wyburton's shoulder.

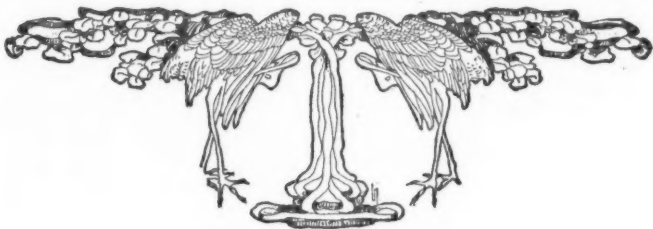
"It's the swee—sweetest thing I ever saw," gurgled that lady.

"And shall we have supper afterward?" cried Adèle, darting at Cowen.

"Supper, dinner, luncheon, breakfast—anything you want," he murmured, radiantly, palely incoherent.

"Dearest!" She hugged Evadne. "This puts me square with my press-agent and my professional friends. Hurrah! My reputation is completely restored."

"It wouldn't be the first time the Little Church Around the Corner has done that for a lady, would it?" said Evadne, who was now herself again.



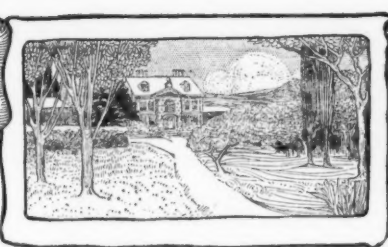
SONG OF A SHEPHERD

THERE'S dainty Corinne in the lane
 A-hunting strawberries;
 And Phœbe spying in the grass
 For clover prophecies;
 And Phyllis fair with wreathéd hair
 Like cowslips shimmering;
 But I love Bess—who spins at home
 And to herself doth sing.

O red are Corinne's lips—more red
 With scarlet berries' stain;
 And Phœbe's pretty finger-tips
 To capture me are fain;
 And Phyllis seems the blithest far
 Of maids a-summering;
 But mine is Bess—who spins at home,
 And to herself doth sing.

GRACE HAZARD CONKLING.

PIGTAIL



By
Owen
Oliver



YOU look as if you'd been guilty of a crime, Vincent!" said the millionaire.

"Only a failure," said his secretary. "There's a young lady whom I can't save you from. She's taken my armchair and a volume of the encyclopedia; and she says that she shall stop till she's finished it, or seen you!"

They both laughed.

"Who is she?" the millionaire asked.

"She won't tell me. It's a secret, she says."

"What does she want?"

"That's a secret, too."

They laughed again. They were both young men, and evidently young men who enjoyed life.

"Come, Vincent," the millionaire urged, "you know the signs. Is she an interviewer or a collector?"

The secretary shook his head.

"She's a child!" he said. "A pretty child, too! She's only about fifteen. Big black eyes and big black pigtail. She tries to be grown-up; but she can't manage it. She put down the encyclopedia and began teasing the cat with the hearth-brush as soon as I pretended to be busy with my work. She looked as if she'd tease me with the hearth-brush for two pins!"

"Oh," said the millionaire, "that's all right. I always get on with kids. Show her in and let her bring the hearth-brush, if she likes. I don't mind."

There were no signs of playfulness, however, about the young lady whom the secretary bowed in. She drew her-

self to her full height, and surveyed the millionaire from head to foot with dignified coolness. Then she tossed her enormous pigtail over her shoulder with a jerk of her head.

"You're not Mr. Mann," she said. "You're trying to put me off with some one else because I'm not grown-up."

The millionaire smiled genially—he really was a pleasant young fellow—and placed a chair.

"Let's try to find out who I am then," he suggested. "I shall maintain that I am Charles Mann, unless you can disprove it. What is the matter with me?"

"You're too young," she said; but she accepted the chair with a grown-up bow.

Mr. Mann searched a bundle of periodicals on a side table till he found one with an account of himself, and a villainous portrait.

"I don't know whether you can recognize me," he said plaintively. "It doesn't make me out very good-looking."

She compared the portrait and the original carefully till she was satisfied. Then she laid down the paper and folded her hands across one knee.

"Looks don't matter much in a man," she said generously. "I think it's you; but you don't seem old enough."

"I'm fearfully old," he assured her.

"How old?" she wanted to know.

"Nearly thirty," he told her.

"I was fifteen last month," she confided. "I know it's young; but I shall soon be older. I'm growing very fast."

"You seem to be growing very nicely," he observed.

"I expect I shall grow all right," she

asserted. "You see, we're a good-looking family; and we're good-tempered. It's—constitutional. I think that's the right word."

"It is an excellent word, and an excellent trait," he agreed feelingly. "My family possesses it almost to excess."

She nodded.

"I should think *you* were good-tempered," she admitted. "Are there many in your family?"

"Only myself!"

"You aren't married?"

"No!" He laughed.

"Or engaged?"

"No!" He raised his eyebrows. "Are you interviewing me for a paper?"

"Oh, dear, no! I couldn't write for a paper. I make mistakes in spelling sometimes. Are you in love with any one?"

He stared at her in amazement.

"Really!" he began. Then he laughed. "I wasn't five minutes ago," he said.

"I think you're only chaffing," she told him, "because I'm too young to fall in love with."

"Well," he said, "I'm not in love with any one else. You are rather an inquisitive young lady, don't you think?"

"It is necessary to know all about you before I tell you what I came about," she assured him.

He rose and took a volume of "Who's Who" from a shelf, opened it at his name, and handed it to her. She studied the paragraph for a time, but shut the book and shook her head.

"It doesn't tell the sort of things that I want to know," she complained. "If you wouldn't mind my asking you a few questions that—that might seem rather rude? I don't mean to be rude, you know, only— It's very important."

"Very well. What is the first important question?"

She eyed him with her head on one side.

"I should like to know if you are very wicked—for a millionaire?" she stated gravely.

"For a millionaire," he asserted solemnly, "I am quite good."

"Then," she demanded, waving her

forefinger at him, "how did you make your money?"

"I didn't," he explained. "My father made it."

"Was *he* very—" She paused suddenly. "I beg your pardon," she said, with a blush, "of course *you* would not think so."

"I certainly do not think so," he said decidedly. "Why should he be?"

"I thought millionaires always were," she owned. "Haven't you a wicked secret in your past?"

"I am afraid not," he acknowledged.

"You're a very funny millionaire," she stated, with a puzzled frown. "You're young, and you're not wicked; and you're not a bit vulgar; and you're quite—quite nice in your manners."

He turned round as if to pick up something. He had to laugh.

"I take particular pains with my manners," he claimed. "I am glad that you like them."

"Yes," she admitted. "But you can't be really nice, or you wouldn't do it."

"Do what?" he inquired.

She tossed her pigtail from back to front, untied the ribbon, and retied it.

"You don't know me," she remarked.

"No," he said. "It is my turn to ask questions now. Will you tell me your name?"

"Lady Rosamund Poore," she said.

"They call me Pigtail at home."

"Oh!" he said. "They do, do they? I see! Well, Lady Pigtail, you think I am not really nice?"

"You *seem* all right," she admitted, "but you are going to take our castle; and the land, too. I don't think— Do you think it's nice of you, Mr. Mann?"

She leaned forward eagerly; and he leaned back in his chair and looked at her. Lady Rosamund Poore was the most charming child he had ever seen, he decided.

"Have you asked your father about it?" he inquired.

"Father!" She shrugged her shoulders. "*He* doesn't understand anything about it. He'd say that he had consulted the solicitors! Mr. Grayson is the one who always comes. He's a silly

old man, and I call him Noah! I don't believe he understands it either, only pretends to! When I asked him he said that I was too young to discuss such matters."

"I am afraid that is just what I was going to say, Lady Pigtail."

"You can't call any one Lady Pigtail," the girl protested. "If we're not friends you ought to call me Lady Rosamund; and if we are you ought to call me Pigtail."

"Then I'll call you Pigtail," said Mr. Mann. "I am afraid, Pigtail, you couldn't understand."

"I can understand anything, if I give my mind to it. Miss Straite says so. She's my governess, and very clever. She wears spectacles. She isn't *exactly* a frump."

"Are her manners good?" Mr. Mann inquired, with a twinkle in his eye.

"Her manners are *too* good."

"I see! And you don't generally give your mind to it?"

"Not generally!" They looked at each other and laughed with friendly understanding. "I will now," she promised.

"Very well. I'll try to show you that I am not getting your property in a wicked manner. It's like this: Your great-grandfather and grandfather and father all borrowed a good deal of money. The people who lent the money wanted to be sure that they would get it back some day. If *you* lent money you would want it back, wouldn't you?"

"I never have any to lend!" cried the girl.

"I see! Well, they had; and they lent it; and they wanted to be sure of getting it back. So they had mortgages on the property."

"Oh! Now you're talking like Noah! I don't understand mor—whatever they call the things."

"It's very simple. They were promises that, if they didn't have the money back, they should have a piece of the property instead. That was fair, wasn't it?"

"I don't know." She pulled her pigtail as if it were the rudder of her mind. "It was *our* property."

"But you see it was *their* money! Suppose you paid a shilling for a box of chocolates——"

"I don't buy them in boxes," she observed. "You don't get enough for the money."

"Do you like chocolates?"

"Of course!" She opened her eyes wide. "Don't you?"

"I'm too old!" He laughed. "But I happen to have some here." He opened a drawer and pulled out a gorgeous box, tied with silk ribbons. "Try some."

She selected a huge chocolate slab with crystallized violets on top, and began nibbling at it.

"Why do you keep them if you don't like them?" she wanted to know.

"They were for a baby friend."

"Oh! And you're giving them to me. Poor baby!"

"She shall have some more. Try this one—and this—and this."

"It's very kind of you. Yes, I see what you mean. I think it's fair. It must be or you wouldn't say so."

"I hope not. Well, you see, the money hasn't been paid; and it's grown to rather a lot, with the interest—you know what that is?"

"It's in the arithmetic," she said, "and I can do it. Compound is the worst."

"I'm afraid the interest was compound; and rather higher than I think quite fair; but I had nothing to do with that. I did not lend the money, you understand. I am not a money-lender."

"I am glad of that," she said emphatically.

"Try these fellows with walnuts on top. Now, the people who lent the money say that they must have it back, or else they will take the property instead. And your father—I expect Mr. Noah put it into his head—thought that if he sold the property himself he would have a little money over after paying them. Mr. Noah heard that I wanted to buy an estate—I don't know what I shall do with it, but it was a fancy of my father's. So Mr. Noah came to me. I have made an offer which Mr. Noah—he is not nearly such a stupid old gentleman as you think—said that he consid-

ered a very fair one. You can ask him about that, Pigtail, if you like."

"Oh!" cried the girl. "As if I doubted your word, Mr. Mann! Of course I don't."

"That is nice of you. So you see I shall only take what I pay for, as people always do."

"They don't always," she contradicted. "Not millionaires. I've read a lot of stories about them; and they never take the property in the end."

"What do they do?"

"They marry the daughter," she said firmly.

"Oh-h-h!" said the millionaire.

"But sometimes," she added, "they have a fit of remorse, and let her marry the man she loves instead."

"But I haven't done anything to be remorseful for!" he cried.

"No," she agreed. "And she isn't in love with anybody, because—she isn't old enough."

"Then how can I marry her?" he asked.

Lady Rosamund replaited the end of her pigtail, tied it up again, and threw it back over her shoulder.

"Couldn't you wait till I grow up?" she asked. "That's what I came about! I—I thought it was my duty."

"To marry me?"

"When I grow up; if you want to, of course, I mean."

"And do you think it's my duty to marry you?"

"No-o," she admitted. "They don't do it because it's their duty, only because they want to. If I were grown-up, perhaps you would?" She looked at him appealingly.

"Very likely," he agreed. "Very likely! But, you see, you're not."

"Don't you think it's very hard lines?" she pleaded. "That they should lose everything because I'm not grown-up? You see—mother cries about it. And father walks about the place and looks at everything and shakes his head. They think it's such a disgrace to sell the castle, and— Don't you think you could wait and see how I grew up? I mean to try to be very nice. And if I were, you might—" She paused.

"Might marry you? Nice little Pigtail!" He put his hand on her shoulder sympathetically.

"If I *did* seem nice," she pleaded.

He twirled his mustache thoughtfully.

"There's an old verse, Pigtail," he remarked. "I don't know if you've heard it. 'What care I how fair she be, if she be not fair to me.' Are they nice to their rich husbands? The dutiful daughters in the stories?"

"No-o," she admitted, "not generally. But I should be. I think it's only fair. You see"—she leaned forward eagerly—"the difficulty is that they are always in love with somebody else first. I should take care not to fall in love because I should know that I'd got to marry you. That's the advantage of arranging beforehand!"

"Ye-es! But suppose I fell in love with some one else? While you were growing up?"

"Then you'd marry her, I suppose," Lady Rosamund said gloomily. "But"—she brightened up—"you could go to some wild parts, where there aren't any ladies, only black women. You wouldn't be likely to fall in love with a black woman, would you?"

"No-o. I hardly think so."

"If you stayed there for about two years, I should think it would be all right. I should be seventeen then; and you'd have to come to see me directly you came back; and I'd take *jolly* good care that you didn't fall in love with anybody else!"

And then Mann's mirth overcame him at last, and he laughed till he had to wipe his eyes. Lady Rosamund rose with hurt dignity, and stated her intention of going; but he put her back in her chair. She sat there and blinked a little.

"I think it's horribly mean of you to laugh at me," she complained, "just because I want to keep our place for mother and father. And I don't see what there is to laugh at. Of course I know that I'm only—only a 'flapper' now. I don't care! I shall grow up ever so much nicer."

"My dear little Pigtail," Mann said, "you'll grow up very, very nice, I am

sure; but I don't believe you can possibly grow nicer. You are quite the nicest girl I have ever known; and quite the prettiest. I'm not laughing at the idea of my marrying you, but at the idea of your marrying me. You see, there's a difficulty that I expect you haven't thought of, Pigtail. I should want my wife to be in love with me. I wouldn't marry the nicest girl in the world unless I thought that she was. It's a—*a prejudice that I have.*"

"Oh-h-h!" said Lady Rosamund slowly. "In the stories—I suppose they hoped the wives were going to afterward, but——"

"But I shouldn't be content to wait till afterward, Pigtail. I should want to be sure first. That's another silly prejudice of mine."

"I don't think it's silly," said Lady Rosamund honestly. "I think it's—Well, you're a nicer kind of millionaire." She bit the end of her pigtail thoughtfully. "I've often wondered about falling in love," she owned at length. "It seems so ridiculous! But I expect it won't when I'm older. Couldn't you wait and see if I did?"

"Fall in love with me?"

"Yes. I shouldn't unless you did, of course."

"Of course not!" He laughed a little. "Then your proposal is that I should wait for two or three years before taking the castle, and see if we could fall in love with each other? And if we did—I should take you instead?"

"Yes," she said. "That's it! Will you?"

"Shake hands on it!" he said. "I'll see what I can do. The falling in love ought to be easy—for me! But I expect it will be difficult to arrange about the castle. Your father won't like taking a favor from me; and if I told him of our bargain—Upon my word, Pigtail, I'm afraid he would say that it was nonsense!"

"People always think that other people's love-affairs are nonsense," said Lady Rosamund wisely.

"I thought it was only a money affair?" he suggested.

"It was; but you've altered it. 'No love, no money!' I've got to try and—you know!" She blushed a little. "You've got to try, too."

"Pigtail," he said, "I believe—Were any of your ancestresses burned as witches?"

"I don't think so; but some of my ancestors were hanged and beheaded—lots of them! I'll show you them in the picture-gallery when you come down. You'll have to come down soon, to get over father. He's easy to get over."

"I'll come on Saturday; after I've seen Mr. Noah. By the way, how did you come here?"

"Train. I slipped off. There'll be a row, if they find out; but I don't expect they will. I'm going back by the one-ten."

"I'll see you to the station," he offered, "and put you in charge of the guard. You're too young to travel alone, and you must promise me not to do it again. I've a sort of right to look after you now, I think."

"Yes," she agreed. "I'll promise."

He took her to the station, exchanged her ticket to first-class—she had only possessed money enough to come third—bought her a dozen periodicals and several boxes of chocolates, and tipped the guard to look after her.

"I should think it would be awfully jolly to be a Mrs. Millionaire," she told him as the train was going off.

"If you liked Mr. Millionaire," he suggested.

"And he liked me. Oh! I *hope* we shall. I'm going to put it in my prayers. Don't you think *you* might?"

"I well might, dear Pigtail," he said soberly.

"I well might," he repeated as he walked away. "I don't believe there was ever such a delightful creature."

Mann went down to see the earl on the following Saturday, and offered to take over the mortgages and wait three years before foreclosing. The estate was capable of improvements, he pointed out; and if these were made he saw no reason why the mortgages should not be paid off in time.

"It seems a shame that this fine old place should go away from your fine old family, sir," he said; "and I'd rather not be the one to take it away from that bonny little daughter of yours."

"Ah!" said the earl. "Yes. Poor little Pigtail. You and she seem to have made friends."

"I hope so." Mann hesitated for a moment. Then he turned to the earl impulsively. "I expect you'll be angry, sir, but it isn't my way to do anything underhand, and I'd like to tell you a curious little story about the way that I became interested in your affairs."

And then he told the story of Lady Rosamund's visit.

"Of course," he concluded, "I make no such bargain; and she'll laugh at it long before she's grown up, but—I really like your little girl very much, and I should be glad to think that the place would be hers. Believe me, sir, I'm not doing it with any view of getting into higher society through you, or anything of that sort. I won't intrude on you."

The earl coughed.

"You're a good fellow," he said, "but—I can't take any favor in the matter. If my solicitors think that, as a business arrangement—I'll speak to them. In any case, I hope to have the honor of your friendship; not, of course, with any idea of—er—anything. Rosamund is—more to her mother and me than the estate, you understand."

"I quite understand," said Mann. "You would naturally desire your daughter to marry some one who was—well, to use a vulgar expression, in your own class."

"My dear fellow," said the earl, "Rosamund will certainly please herself in the matter. At present she is only a child; and a very wild one; and besides, the 'bargain' amounts to nothing. If you fell in love with each other some day, I suppose you would marry without any bargain. Don't let's talk any

more nonsense. You'd better stay for the week-end, and look over the place."

Mann stayed that week-end, and many more; in fact, he got into a habit of spending his week-ends at the castle. He usually came down in his motor and took Pigtail for rides. He taught her billiards and fencing and figure-skating, and bridge and conjuring tricks, and they were always devoted "chums," as they called it. He found ways of almost doubling the revenue from the property, and the earl looked upon him as a financial genius, and the countess almost as a son; but Pigtail always refused to consider him as a brother.

"He's the man I'm going to fall in love with when I come out," she told her mother. "Nice old Charlie!"

As a matter of fact she did not wait till then, and neither did he. They settled the matter on her seventeenth birthday.

"You've grown big enough to fall in love with, Pigtail," he declared, "and big enough to fall in love with me; and we've done it handsomely, bonny girl, haven't we?"

"Yes," said Pigtail.

There was a considerable hiatus in the conversation at this point.

"It's to be a secret engagement, Charlie," she insisted, "because they'd only laugh."

"But a real true engagement," he insisted.

"Why!" She opened her eyes. "It always was! The bargain, you know."

"No," he contradicted. "The bargain was conditional. You were only to marry me if I loved you—"

"You always did!"

"Well—yes! But there was another condition; that you were to marry me for love, not for duty."

She leaned a little closer to him.

"I always did, too!" she whispered. "And it is my duty to marry—the man I love!"

THREE WAYS OF LOVE



By
*H. F. Prevost
Battersby*



WE had all been out the day before, all but the canoe. The randan, and the pair, and the punts, and myself. Even the sandolo had had an outing, after we started, by some one who thought he understood gondoliering, but discovered he didn't, and ran into all the corners and finally fell overboard. We found her in the boat-house when he returned, made fast to the randan's ring, very wet and muddy, untidy-looking and out of temper, as we knew half through the night by the way her strained timbers creaked.

The men and women who scull us often speak of strain. I suppose it's what we feel when we're used the wrong way; only it seems to be worse with them, for we've generally ceased to talk of it by next morning.

We had all been out because there was a big week-end party at the Manor, and the day had proved the first perfect promise of summer, the true June blue with just the scent of a breeze; out from before the sun was westering till the late moon was up, so that we had all been put away anyhow, unmopped and with our carpets rumpled and our cushions askew—most uncomfortable.

But next day being Sunday, and every one, I suppose, rather tired, we were left alone, after being mopped and wiped and tidied, till an hour after the church bells had rung. Then two of the young gentlemen came down, and took out the pair. They knew very little about rowing, and we heard the poor

thing floundering up the river, with her head pulled this way and that, and a wake behind her that only a water-worm could have followed.

Then there was the Sunday stillness again; such a stillness!

Not silence, but the low, hot, deep June hum which you only hear when you turn your ear to it, and the water round the piles in the boat-house just opening and shutting its mouth, like a fish feeding half asleep.

The meadows began to breathe so fast in the sun that all the buttercups and the red dock plumes began to quiver, and a queer little mist came on the water when the breeze died off it, like breath on a looking-glass. The thatch grew hotter and hotter above us, and presently the bees that live there, and that are glad in summer of the swoop across the cool water, began to pour out quicker and thicker, and to float about in front of it, till we knew it was a swarm.

The swarm went up to the top of the tulip-tree, and the air seemed stiller than ever, when the door of the boat-house opened and a girl came in.

I had seen her often before, because she came many times a year to stay at Cheriton, and I knew how clever her hands were and how light were her feet. She could give points in style to any sculler on the river, and when she took the rudder-lines you knew only by the pleasure of it that she was in the stern. So the skiffs told me, because of course a dinghy can't pretend not to feel such things rather more.

She wore a dress like the March blue

sky behind brown hazel branches, and her hat was bright as a bunch of pink almond-blossom against a thunder-cloud. She came into the house like the young light of the year, before the leaves or anything, and though we were all a bit stiff from the day before, there wasn't one of us that didn't want to be taken, and when she loosed my head-fast and stepped down to the thwart I know that each of my strokes, as it sank in the water, shivered with gladness to be going with her.

She pushed off very gently, as though she felt that the day and the water and the air were asleep, and did not want to wake them; and, just dipping the sculls, she let me float slowly down the stream, which here so vacillates about the meadows that it really does seem to have dreamed its way.

We went very gently and we did not go very far. Sometimes the water-lilies held us a long while, with the blades dipped among them and her eyes far away, before she found out that we had stopped.

At last, where the river comes back to the Manor, and a big syringa-bush bends down over it from the wild garden, she pulled in to the bank and made me fast.

She dropped the cushions on to the floor, and sat down in the stern upon them, with her arm over the gunwale and her head upon her hand, and the book which she had brought on the seat beside her. But she did not open it.

Presently she lifted the other arm and drew down a long slim spray of the syringa which had one great tuft of scented white and gold at the end of it. She held it to her nose, and as she breathed its odors the lids dropped over her eyes, and she stayed quite still. And when she opened them she smiled, and kissed it, oh! but ever so lightly, with the very tips of her lips, and let the spray fly back again to its place in the tree.

Then suddenly something seemed to blow the smile from her face, the way the wind rubs out the sky-pictures from the river with the roughness of little waves, and a man's voice came from the

shrubby path which runs down to the landing.

It was Lord Farncombe. He was a young man; at least, not thirty; but his voice was not young, and no one could have liked it.

He seemed surprised to meet Miss Ormsby, and said what luck it was, as he'd been looking for her everywhere. She seemed surprised, too, but she didn't say anything.

He asked her why she wasn't at church; and she said she had changed her mind, and thought she'd get more good from the river.

"I suppose you often change your mind?" he said.

She looked up at him in a queer sort of way. "Oh, no! Not oftener than it changes me," she answered.

He didn't seem to understand that, for he just left it alone, and said he hoped she was getting the good she expected.

"I was just beginning to," she told him.

"Couldn't we get it together," he suggested.

She shook her head.

"Why not?" he asked.

"We couldn't get anything together," she said quietly.

"I believe you think I'm not the sort of chap to enjoy that kind of thing," he said.

"I don't think about it at all," she told him.

"Of course I'm not like Lionel Dane," he began.

She looked at him in that queer way again.

"Not in the very least," she agreed gravely.

He laughed.

"Of course these writer chaps——" he began again.

"He's not a writer," she said sharply.

"Oh, well, he does write about those tours of his," he persisted. "I saw you with his book on what's its name."

"If you really want to know," she said, turning on its end the book beside her, "I've got it with me here."

"Oh, hang it all!" he mumbled, and his voice sounded even less pleasant

than before. "Can't you ever get away from him?"

Yet she took even that quite quietly.

"It's only the things one wants to get away from that one can't," she said.

But he didn't seem able even to interpret that. He asked her if she were going to sit there all the morning, and though she as good as told him that she wanted to be alone, he managed, somehow or other, to insert himself on the thwart in front of her, to save her, so he explained, the trouble of sculling back to the boat-house.

"It's no trouble to me," she said.

It wasn't; any boat in which she had ever pulled would know that. The leathers slid against the tholes, the sculls caught the water, a little wave sang against the stem, the deep oily eddies went gurgling by, the blades flung off a diamond spray as they were feathered and flew back to snatch again at the river and send twin pools of it whirling and bubbling after those before them, already spreading out into the stream.

Trouble! It was just a joyous game, of which no one could feel tired. But it wasn't that for Lord Farncombe. He was never happy doing anything in a boat, and of course a dinghy was the worst sort of boat for him, because everything you do wrong in a dinghy is made bigger by the smallness of it.

Miss Ormsby knew just how bad he was, and he got no help from her steering. We yawned from side to side, making jerky swerves from one bank to the other; and hardly going forward at all. Lord Farncombe was fat, and he began to grow hot and angry, and to scull even worse.

Miss Ormsby watched him with her hands over the book on her lap, and with what just wasn't a smile on her face; at least, it was on her face but you couldn't tell where.

"I say, couldn't you steer a bit better," demanded his lordship.

"I think it would be just possible," she agreed sweetly. "If you'd like to change seats I'll try."

"You know what I mean," he said

huffily. "Can't you steer her better now?"

But she was determined he should ask for it right.

"I'm not steering her at all," she answered.

"Well, then, won't you," he grunted.

"Oh, certainly," she smiled, drawing the lines over her shoulders; but the way she said it must have made him feel just the sort of duffer she thought him.

That was perhaps what she wanted, for he was silent for some time, and she, looking away across the water, seemed almost to have forgotten he was there.

Then he said, as though he had been talking to her all the time inside of him:

"It isn't very easy to get a word with you down here, Miss Ormsby."

Her eyes came back to him as though they had been miles away.

"Oh, isn't it?" she murmured. "But you've got it now."

"Yes, and much good it's doing me, isn't it?" he grumbled.

"You oughtn't to take things that aren't good for you," she told him, as though she were talking to him about his health.

"Do you *try* to make it hard for a chap?" he asked.

"Make what hard for him?" she inquired.

"To tell you what—what he feels," he blurted.

"I don't try to make it either hard or easy," she said indifferently. "It wouldn't interest me to know."

"I'm going to *make* it interest you," he declared.

She shook her head definitely.

"I don't think so," she said.

He looked angry at that.

"You don't think anything I could do would interest you?"

"I don't know what you can do," she said.

"You know what I do do?"

"Yes, dimly," she said.

"And you don't think much of it?"

"I don't think anything of it," she said.

"Why?" he snapped. "You do the

same things yourself! You hunt, you shoot, you yacht, you go racing, you mess about abroad. Well, what's the difference between us?"

"There isn't any," she agreed dangerously.

"Well?" he demanded.

"Yet I'm a woman and you're a man," she said.

The way she said it made him look at her closely, and his face changed.

"What do you want me to do?" he asked.

"Want you?" she exclaimed, and her eyebrows went up. "Why should I want you to do anything?"

"Well," he said crossly, "suppose you can imagine yourself ever wanting any man to do anything, what would it be?"

"I know what it wouldn't be," she replied; "something that a woman had suggested to him."

"Why not?" he exclaimed. "You rather like to be an inspiration, don't you?"

"Yes," she said, "but we don't admire the men who can't get on without it."

"You're precious hard to please," he grumbled.

"Oh, no, I'm not," she said quickly. "I should be pleased with anything a man did splendidly, and loved doing, and wouldn't alter for all the women in the world."

"We can't all do things splendidly," he objected.

"I should think not, indeed," she agreed cheerfully. "Very few of you can do anything but worry other men's ideas."

"Well, but what's to happen to them?" he asked.

She shook her head with complete indifference.

"It's nothing to you?" he questioned.

"Nothing in the world."

"You've a soul above such triflers?" he sneered.

"I've my likes and dislikes," she smiled. "I suppose you have them, too."

"It's not that," he objected; "it's simply that you don't think them good enough."

"Well," she smiled again, "I suppose we've all some sort of standard."

"You don't think *me* good enough," he pressed.

"Oh!" she answered. "Is that the offense?" She looked across at him quietly. "Well, are you?" she ended.

That took him rather aback.

"It's the third oldest earldom in England," he announced testily.

"What is?" she queried.

"Farncombe."

"Oh, is it? But weren't we talking about you?" she objected.

"I *am* Farncombe!" he insisted.

"I'm Marion Ormsby," she replied.

"Would another name have made any difference to my character?"

"It might have to your possessions," he suggested.

"Oh, I admit your possessions; they're magnificent," she agreed. "But weren't we talking only about you?"

"They go with me," he said.

"Certainly," she assented. "My new hat goes with me; but though I admit it makes a difference, it doesn't really alter what I dreadfully am."

"Of course, if you're jesting," he began huffily.

"About anything so serious as an ancient title? Heaven forgive you for thinking me capable of it!" she exclaimed.

"Well you seemed to think a new hat a fair equivalent," he mumbled, mollified; not catching at all the tone of her temper.

"For an old coronet? Oh, in that connection, quite," she returned.

"In what connection?" he asked suspiciously.

"Of adding value to the wearer," she replied. "The only difference being that my new hat becomes me, while your pearls and ermine make you look like—like a member of the House of Lords." She laughed lightly.

"Well," he said, with a fat smile—he didn't seem to suspect how near she had come to a less pleasing comparison—"I suppose one can live that down?"

"Yes," she reflected thoughtfully, "I suppose you can. But, of course, it

must be hard, and, perhaps, we don't make enough allowance."

He stared, as if he couldn't believe she was serious. Then, when he understood, he said with a sort of disapproving crossness:

"If you only want to make fun of me, it's not much use my going on?"

"Going on?" she queried, puzzled.

"With what I wanted to say to you," he told her. "Haven't you seen what I've been wanting to say?"

But she shook her head, looking curiously at him.

"One never has an idea what a man wants," she said.

He waited a moment as if he couldn't make up his mind to it; then he blurted it out.

"I want *you*!" he cried.

"Oh!" she said, still looking at him, but with her head bent down a little so that she looked up under her brows.

He made a kind of lurch forward as if to catch hold of her, but she shrank back in a way that would have stopped most men. It stopped him.

"Marion!" he exclaimed. "No, let me go on," he continued as she shook her head. "About one thing at least a man may ask a woman to hear him."

"I don't want to hear you," she said, lowering her eyes.

"What harm can it do you?" he asked roughly.

"There are some things," she told him, "a woman doesn't like to remember she made it possible for a man to ask."

"Oh, don't mind me!" he chafed.

"I wasn't thinking of you," she said.

"Well, of what people will say?" he suggested.

"Still less of that."

"Of what then?" he asked.

"Of what I shall say to myself."

He looked at her doubtfully.

"I don't understand," he said.

"No," she agreed; "you don't understand, you can't understand, you never will understand. Won't you leave it at that?"

"No," he said doggedly, "I won't. There's more rot talked about understanding women than about most things

that don't concern 'em. I don't want to understand you; I want to have you; I want to give you all I've got."

He said it in a fine, big, bold way, which made it seem not so bad as it sounded. She nodded her head softly. I think if she ever admired him a little, it was just then.

"Yes," she said, "but I want what you haven't got."

"What!" he asked her.

"The love that I love," she said gently.

"You mean the man you love," he snorted.

"No," she said, "I don't."

"Well," he persisted, "if it's only a question of love, you'd get to want mine. There aren't two sorts of it."

"No," she smiled; "there are two thousand."

"Oh, damn!" he said.

Somehow, perhaps because it meant so much, the word didn't sound so dreadful. But what it told most of all was the difference between them. He seemed to feel it said that, and so it sounded almost tragical. But it was so helpless and natural that she found it hard not to smile.

Perhaps the trying not to made her look more lovely. Something, anyway, went to his head. He called out her name as though it hurt him, and lunged forward again, as if to capture her hands. But this time she shrank from him sideways, leaning down upon the gunwale, so that we all gave a great lurch together, and he came down very hard on his knees on the flooring, and his hands clutched the back of the seat instead of her.

We were close up against the float when it happened, and before he had got himself into a dignified shape again she had brought us alongside—she never lost *her* head—and was out upon the staging. Like a ninny he was off after her the moment he could clamber out, but she turned and told him to tie me up; you could hear what she thought of his leaving me there adrift, and she would have made a face if she had seen the knot he put into my head-fast. Perhaps she made one when he

caught her up, which, at the pace he started, he must have done long before she found herself in the garden.

But, after all, it was probably just because I had been left like that, instead of in the boat-house, that I saw some more of her the same day. It was sultry hot in the early afternoon, and the sun set all my timbers starting, lying out there in the burn of it against the side of the raft, and thinking of the deep shadows of the boat-house into which the swallows slid chuckling, with beaks full for their little ones, through the gauze of floating bees about the entrance, all broken up with the swarming, too upset and expectant to do any work.

It's only at swarming-time that bees sometimes seem like people. For all the rest of the summer they just go for their job; and never worry wondering what may be the sense of it.

They fly so fast they look like a streak in the air, a thin, straight, golden channel homeward from the flower, along which flows the honey all the summer's day.

But just at swarming-time they seem to stop and think—those that have been left behind, and no one knows, not even themselves, why they have been left behind—and to realize that in a day or two, or in a week or two at the longest, they will have to stop with their last load of sweetness far away from the hive, for fear death should come upon them after they have reached it, and creep under a leaf and die, no one knowing or caring, and leave the sealed honey which has worn them out for those that have never spread their wings for it. And when they think too much of that, they store no more for the days of scarceness, but live idly on the open flowers, and winter comes and kills them in the empty comb. The swallows say it's because of some trouble with their queens that these things happen. Perhaps! But it's only then that bees seem like people.

No one appeared to be moving in the hot afternoon, except one of the still-maids from the Manor, who came down through the wood and went walking

hand in hand with her young man, from where she met him at the ferry, across the great meadow on the farther side.

Just when the shadows were stretching out toward the place of the dawn—and it's only when the dawn comes early that they seem to linger so long on the way—I heard Marion Ormsby's voice again, coming down to the river, and it was easy to tell by the soft kindness of it that she was with some one she liked.

I knew him at once when he stepped on to the float—Douglas Lavington—for his home was not far away, and he was only a day's guest at the Manor.

Not that his home meant much to him, for he was a soldier who had done his soldiering in very distant places, and in the sudden way of these last years had come into a little kind of fame. His brown face was as keen as a boy's, in spite of the trim grayness of his mustache and the rough gray locks about his forehead; and men were ready to do anything to win the praise of his smile. Whether he talked or listened he seemed to be giving all of himself to you, and when he laughed you felt that the happy depths of him were stirred. He was a man you must have trusted, almost before he had spoken, against the oaths of half the world.

He broke off what he was saying when he saw me floating there, to ask her if the dinghy would do, and she assented so doubtfully that he wanted to know, as he wrestled with Lord Farncombe's knots in my headfast, what harm the dinghy had ever done her. When she told him it had carried her with people she didn't like, he said:

"Won't you give me the hope, by using it, that I'll redress the balance?"

She looked at him, very friendly, but as if a little afraid.

"Oh, yes, I'll do that," she smiled, as she stepped into me.

"It's exceedingly nice," he said, as he pushed clear with the stroke-scutt, and then pulled my head round into the river, "to learn, even by a guarded implication, that one is liked a little."

"Oh," she protested, "that sounds almost ungrateful from a man who is liked so much."

"Oh, the much more and how little it is," he laughed, "when you don't want it, and the dreadfully difficult deal it is when you do."

She looked straight into his face, and her eyelids flinched at what she saw there.

"You were telling me about your new appointment," she reminded him.

"Yes," he said, taking quite humbly her redirection, but also, like the man he was, not turned in the least by it from his purpose. "I wanted you to be interested."

"I am," she said, "and I want to hear all you can tell me. Did you expect to get it?"

"Not in my vainest moments," he declared.

"I don't believe you have vain moments," she objected.

"You will," he answered her, with a sigh, "when you know me a very little longer. But a man would require a good conceit of himself to 'expect' Kharan."

"Major Treherne said it was the biggest thing in India."

"Well," he admitted, "Treherne knows more about it than I do, because he was out there at headquarters when they made up the new commands. But it's big with all sorts of possibilities, and there are more troops in it already than one of my lowly rank is thought fit to handle."

"Of your lowly rank!" she laughed.

"Oh, yes, I know," he sighed, "that any sort of a general seems to the lay mind a creature of hoar antiquity, and almost a finished product. But I'm the most insignificant sort of a general, and even of that sort one of the least."

"That's why you got Kharan?" she suggested mischievously.

"Yes, it really is," he said. "Thinking of me as a kind of grandfather—you do think of me as a grandfather, don't you?"

"Of course," she smiled.

"Well, you can't in consequence appreciate that to some of my seniors I seem almost giddily youthful."

"Is that why you got Kharan?" Marion repeated.

"Yes," he said, "it just is. In a new station like Kharan there's a tremendous lot to be done, and they needed a man who'd got his work still in him."

"If I were you," she said thoughtfully, "I should want all the dignity I'd won."

"Oh, no, you wouldn't," he returned, with a very decided shake of the head. "You don't realize what goes to the winning."

"What?" she asked gently.

"All that's best in the best years," he said.

"Are they the best years?" she asked doubtfully.

"Ah, yes, yes," he sighed; "but one only knows it when they are gone, and there's nothing left but to pretend they weren't, or that one still has them. I do that, you see. Because I'm not quite decrepit, I defy my gray hairs. Instead of talking to you like a father——"

He stopped suddenly, as if afraid of calling her attention to the alternative, and pulled a few strokes in silence. He was not a finished sculler, but Marion just by a turn of her shoulders, over which the rudder-lines hung, took care that nothing he did wrong should matter. It was very different with Lord Farncombe.

"And in the best years," she asked, going back as if still unsatisfied with his assertion, "you were fighting, I suppose, all over the place?"

"Yes," he murmured; "Zululand, Egypt, the Sudan, Burma, Afghanistan."

"But you were enjoying them?" she protested.

"Yes," he admitted, "immensely."

"I see," she said severely; "you're just like the little boy who cried because he couldn't eat all the cake on the table."

"Yes," he agreed humbly; "it is the way of the best years to feel that whatever filled them was a waste of appetite. One wants to have tasted all the kinds of cake."

"You're going to," she said gently.

He looked hard at her.

"Am I?" he asked. Then he turned his eyes across the water running past

us, and over the great meadows all a smudge of yellow under the low sun, and drew a long breath.

"How absurd of me to pretend to tell you such a thing as that," she said evasively.

"No," he replied slowly, "you're the only one who can."

"Oh, I didn't mean——" she began anxiously.

"Wait," he begged her, "just till you've heard what I have to say to you; then we'll both know how much it means. Will you?"

She nodded.

"It's about Kharan, in the first place," he said quietly, and looked as if to catch the least color of relief on her face. "Did Major Treherne tell you anything more about it?"

"Only what I've repeated to you," she replied.

"About the sort of job it was for a soldier?" he suggested. "I'm glad he told you that because if I'd begun to buck about the appointment you might have had your doubts."

"I'd have had my doubts that it was you," she assured him.

"Oh," he nodded, "you never can tell. There are times when even a saint may want to give a shine to his halo. If I had one I'd polish it now for all it was worth; but, as I haven't, I want to make the most of Kharan. Except, perhaps, Peshawar, it's the most interesting place in India—for a soldier, I mean; but for any one it must be one of the most fascinating places in the world."

"Really?" she said, her eyes set gravely upon his face.

"It's never warmer at the worst than Italian weather," he went on; "and even from that you can go higher up into the hills. Winter is like the best that England can give you, clear and cloudless and cold, with snow on the ground and often ice that will bear you. In spring the whole place is pink blossom, almond, apricot and peach, a great hollow of flowers in the white bowl of the hills; and in summer the fruit falls to the ground, grapes and nectarines and peaches, for want of some one to pick it."

"It sounds like fairy-land," she said; but she said it as one who never thought to live there.

"It is like fairy-land," he assured her. "A fairy-land peopled with men and women, with death hard by to keep them keenly alive, and danger hiding along the frontier to keep them happily occupied. Go where you will on British soil you won't find as much that makes for the joy of life so close to the stimulating risk of living."

"The asp among the roses," she quoted thoughtfully.

"Aye, and such roses!" he declared. "The gardens are smothered with them, all cream and crimson, from March till December; and the nightingales sing through the scent of them the loveliest months of the spring, when the frozen brooks are all bubbling again and the moon rises over the snows."

She looked at him, wondering; as if, much as she liked him, she had only then learned that there was even more in him than men admired.

"And all this in India," she murmured.

"Yes, it's India, thank Heaven!" he said fervently. "But, except for the dark faces and the shapes of sudden death, there's little that's like India anywhere about it. We're gay, as you must be in India, death and sickness see to that; we dance as, over here, you've no understanding; we go from hard work to hard play, rackets and tennis and cricket and polo and football and hockey all in the one season; yes, and a real English pack of hounds. But we're honest, as India isn't always. No thanks to us. We haven't the enervating heat and the life and notions it breeds; nor the same sort of hill-stations. In Kharan we take walking exercise, a thing incredible in the plains; we come home to five o'clock tea and a blazing fire instead of loafing round drinks at the club. It's more like English life, only keener and fuller and finer; and even the babies, the fat babies, have bronzed faces instead of liver-green ones all the year round." He stopped and looked at her. "Do you know why I'm telling you all this?"

"Yes," she said sadly.

"I shall have the chance of it for five years, perhaps for longer, if I'm wanted. It's like a little kingdom to the man who runs it; he's supreme in many ways that a king is not; and his wife, if he's lucky enough to have one, is a queen who's still her own mistress. She sets the style, the tone and the fashion for a little world of women, to whom she may be everything that a queen is and much that a queen can't be. And after Kharan there are other places; at home perhaps, with more consideration even, and wider influence. I'm young, as I've told you, for a major-general, the youngest there is. Forty-two isn't, after all, hoar antiquity, however gray the years have made one, and I sha'n't have to fear that they'll compromise my promotion. To a man as lucky as I've been, everything's possible. I *have* to 'buck' you see?"

She nodded.

"You understand why? A man doesn't think of these things till he wants a woman to want them, too. Then he starts to deck himself out with attractions as if he were a shop-window."

His face quickened with the charm of that gravely sweet smile of his that grew wistful as he looked at her.

She laid a hand over his upon the scull.

"I'm *so* sorry," she whispered.

"You wouldn't say that if there was the faintest chance for me, would you?" he asked.

She shook her head slowly.

"It isn't that I've failed to make it look attractive—the shop-window?" he urged.

"You've made it immensely attractive," she told him gently. "I can't believe a woman could resist the offer of it *and* you—if she wasn't in love with a man already."

"That's it, is it?" he murmured.

"That's it," she said. "It couldn't be anything else for me, because I like you more than any man I've met—but one. And I don't believe a woman could get more of life and love from any man than you would give her."

He turned away. It was clearly hard for a moment or two for him to say anything.

"That's kind of you," he said. "It's something at least for a man to be proud of that he was *proxime accessit* for the woman he adored. Proud enough to keep him from anything of which she wouldn't care to hear."

"I shall always care to hear," she told him. "I shall always want to hear. Wherever you are or whatever you are doing I always *shall* hear. And though I shall know that it's not I that am helping to the big things you do, but only your strong brave self, I shall never cease to be proud that you believe I've had a share in them, and more than proud to remember that I once was loved by such a man as you."

He lifted her hand with his on which it still lay, and bent down his lips to it. "Not *once*," he murmured.

She put out her other hand to him.

"Ah, no, no!" she breathed.

He took the two hands in his, looking at her.

"Would you want, if you loved a man with all the strength that was in you, to believe you'd very soon be able to look back on it as a 'had been,' something you could be quite sure of 'getting over'?"

Her eyes had fallen as she slowly shook her head.

"I don't, you see," he said quietly, "either expect or desire to forget you. It would be rather queer, wouldn't it, if a man could, if he pleased, wipe out of his memory the woman to whom he had just offered the rest of his life."

She nodded.

"Yes," she assented. "It was just my selfishness that spoke. I wanted to try and feel that I hadn't hurt you. Just for my comfort." She looked up at him with shining eyes. "Of course I know that you'll remember. How could I be proud to have pleased a man who could forget?"

He pressed her hands, and, as it were, gave them back to her, laying them by her side.

"Thanks," he said. "You see the best thing left me will be to be sure you

know. The only unkindness you could have done would have been to take that from me. But there's one thing I'd like to hear—may I ask it?"

"Anything," she accorded.

"Does *he* know you care for him?"

"I don't know," she murmured.

"He hasn't told you then?"

"That *he* cares? No!" she said.

"But you know it, you've seen it?"

"Not to be sure," she said.

"And if—if he never tells you?"

"I'll love him just the same to the end of all things," she said gravely to his searching eyes; "just—just the same as you will love me."

His glance sank on to the handles of his sculls, he leaned forward dipping the blades of them.

"Quite right!" he murmured.

They went slowly back up-stream, and they spoke very little. The sun was lost behind a long clear golden cloud floating above the meadows in the amber green air; and the whole world was wonderfully still. Only now and then a little bird warbled, or, as they swept us by, the wild screams of the swifts seemed to tear the stillness.

There wasn't the least tremor of wind, but the cooling of the river drew the hot steam off the fields, so that little taps of air came hot and cool against your face.

They talked as they went only of people and things that didn't matter; of people at the Manor and about his home. They were quite close to the boat-house when he said suddenly:

"Can I do anything for him?"

"Do?" she queried.

"If he's in the service I might give him a hand."

"That's good of you," she said. "No, he isn't in the service."

"Can't help him anyhow?" he asked.

"No," she smiled gratefully. "I'm afraid not even to me."

He laid hold of the rope-edge of the float.

"Ah," he sighed, "but you wouldn't let me."

"No," she agreed, "I suppose not. One would have a sneaking fear that

the love that needed helping over its first stile might come afterward to want crutches."

The general handed her out and then poled me into the boat-house. He seemed not to be in any hurry—different from Lord Farncombe—and to have no wish to catch his lady up. But she had stayed for him, and I heard his exclamation of pleased surprise when he stepped out onto the bank, and found her waiting.

All the boats were in the house nodding their heads drowsily under their headfasts, and hardly noticed my coming in.

I had nothing to tell them even had they wished to listen, for boats are sometimes silent like the human people who seem so strange to us—and lay there wondering if Marion Ormsby would ever hear what she wanted from the man she loved, or ever say what she wanted to the man who loved her.

It was twilight already in the boat-house, though the sun was only sinking into the uncut meadow beyond the swathes of hay, and late bees were still coming home, melting from golden motes into the darkness under the overhanging thatch, where the workers' wings, fanning out the hive, made a soft whir in the dusk.

As the evening coolness came the birds began to sing and chatter; and the rooks called as they saw from the sky the flocks wheeling about their nesting woodlands.

The clear summer twilight settled over all, like night drained of its darkness. The last carol of the thrushes ceased, the first faint prick of a star came through the sky. A sweep of soft wings went over the water, and from far down the river an owl cried.

It was dark when we were all startled by the boat-house door being flung open, and the void of it outlined by the flare of a match.

"Which will you have?" asked a voice from the entrance; a voice so lithe and young and alive that it seemed of itself to make a presence, which stayed there after the light had fallen with a hiss on to the floor.

And the voice which answered it was Marion Ormsby's.

"The dinghy," she said.

"Why the dinghy?" asked the other, scraping out sticky gleams of light from matches that failed to take fire.

"There's luck in odd numbers," Marion answered.

"Wonderfully illuminating—a woman's reasons!" the man replied, still groping for a light.

"They *will* ignite on their own box," she laughed, "which is more than can be said for your matches. Here! I'll show you where it is."

She came into the pitch-dark of the boat-house, blundered against him, extracting a humorous nautical direction as to her course, slid her hand down from his shoulder till it fastened about his wrist, and then guided his fingers to the slip-knot in my headfast.

"Are you a cat?" he said.

Leaning down over the black water, he lost his balance and swayed against her.

"I haven't nine lives," she laughed, catching at his shoulder to steady herself. "Wait, I'll get in first."

When he pushed us all out into the summer night I saw that something had happened to Miss Ormsby. I had heard it in her voice, a sort of gay expectation. In her face it was a shyness, almost a softness; but a shyness that was playing at being bold.

She was dressed in misty black, which made the night seem blue about her; over her white shoulders was a dim silver scarf and at her waist a clasp of diamonds, which even in the darkness winked and sparkled like imprisoned stars.

A different woman from the Marion of that afternoon, and very different indeed from the Marion of that morning. Then there was something that forbade about her; her head was held back—out of reach. Even in her sorrow of the afternoon, there had been no unbending. Now her head, with the dark hair dressed close to show the shape of it, leaned forward like a laden flower. There was the warm orange of a rose in the coiled mass of it behind her ear,

which of itself told something; declared a certain proud exuberance—as a ship about to fight declares its colors—if it were but of a prodigal moment before her glass; because she was always reticent of such touches there was seldom "meaning" in what she wore.

"It's on an occasion like this," said the man on the thwart in front of her, backing me down into the main stream, "that a male of the twentieth century feels the magnificent competence of his evening clothes. He realizes that it was not a sheer ardor for beauty only that went to their designing."

"Poor thing," she sighed.

"He feels," he continued thoughtfully, "not only the exhilarating consciousness of being indistinguishable from a waiter, but the profound satisfaction of looking perfectly like a fool."

"You look charming in them," she told him.

"In a boat?"

"They weren't meant for a boat."

"Neither were yours; but, being beautiful, they're appropriate anywhere; ours, being hideous, look everywhere absurd."

"Oh, well," she sighed, "you only wear them on the rare occasions when you're in civilized society. You haven't much to grumble at."

"That's just what makes it much," he declared; "that only when returning to civilization has one to adopt this barbarous attire."

"Men have told me," she said, "men who've had to live in awful out-of-the-way places, that dressing for dinner was the one thing that kept up their self-respect, that saved them from going under."

His head went back in a clear peal of laughter.

"There you are," he cried, "the thing becomes a totem, a fetish. What more proof do you want of its awfulness. Duty, honor, religion are nothing to these friends of yours. A starched shirt-front alone saves them from the abyss."

"Oh, don't be perverse"—she smiled, but there was in her tone the faintest sense of frustration—"or I shall believe

the hard things the duchess says of you."

"What things?" he asked, but without interest.

"Oh, never mind; don't deserve them," she parried. "You'll be proving *her* a totem next."

"A duchess, why, of course!" He rose joyously to the challenge.

"Ssh!" she said. "I didn't come out to talk totems. You'll have an attack of them. I heard you boring General Lavington with them last night at dinner."

"Didn't bore him," he assured her; "he's just as keen as I, and knows a wonderful lot about them—for a soldier. I say, what a good chap he is!"

She nodded gravely.

"Now that's just the sort of man I can imagine a woman wanting to marry. Why hasn't he, I wonder?"

"Married? Why haven't you?"

He looked up at her with round-eyed surprise.

"I?" he paused. "That's *rather* a different matter. You don't imagine that I've had his chances?"

"His chances? Do you mean his offers of a wife?"

"Isn't chances more expressive?" he suggested.

"No, much less. Well, why *haven't* you had them?"

"Offers? Oh, come, don't be unkind."

"Don't be stupid," she said in plain matter of fact. "You haven't had them because you haven't wanted them?"

"No," he objected. "I haven't had them because I haven't been wanted."

She smiled at him, a slow, intense, almost angry smile that might have told him something.

"You frighten women," she said.

"Terribly, I should think," he conceded. "Is that why they don't propose?"

"Yes. They're not afraid of what you obviously are, but of what you obviously aren't. You're inhuman."

"Keep it up," he said encouragingly.

"Well—unhuman; unlike the rest. We think we understand men. We do

as far as concerns us. But we don't feel that about you."

"You don't?"

"I don't," she met him. "It's like going into a dark room. One knows it all right; but a woman always feels a bit creepy till she finds the matches."

"Well—then?" he suggested.

"But we *don't* find the matches—with you. We grope about in the dark, wondering every minute if something isn't going to boo out at us."

"Does anything ever?"

"Oh, often and often," she smiled.

"Dear! How dreadful!" he pondered.

He turned his head, feeling a touch of the current, and pulled us round into the stream, driving me through the thick beds of lilies without tearing them to pieces as only so skilful a sculler could. The night went by in the water darker than the air, and dancing with the golden entanglement of its reflected stars.

Dane pulled steadily for a few moments, with his eyes thoughtfully upon the eddies, swirling from the sculls, that bent the starlight into quoits of gold.

"It's wonderful how little any one, especially a man, knows about himself," he reflected presently. "Here am I, nearly thirty-five, having traveled, so my publishers advertise, seventy thousand miles, for the most part among extremely frank people, and only learning now, by the merest chance—it was, wasn't it?" She shrugged her shoulders. "Well, we'll leave that out—only learning now that my unattractiveness to the other sex——"

"I'd leave that out, too," she suggested dryly.

"Oh, no, you wouldn't," he declared. "Not if you'd felt it." His eye caught hers in the darkness fixed curiously on him. He disengaged his attention with an effort. "I forget what I was saying," he announced blankly.

"You were beginning to talk great nonsense," she informed him, "so it's just as well. And now please go on about your plans."

"Well," he said, meekly acquiescent, "my plans are most noticeable by the

amount there isn't of them. My publishers won't hear of Sumatra."

"Sensible men!" she exclaimed.

"Stupid creatures!" he retorted.

"They say no one knows anything about the place, as if that wasn't just why one wanted to go. And they have all sorts of interesting customs there. Awfully modern. Anticipated Wells' idea—wasn't it Wells' idea?—of a lethal chamber for killing off the old. The grandfathers, when they feel they're past work, hang on to the bough of a fig-tree till they drop off, when their relations, dancing round, call out 'The ripe fruit falls,' and cut them up."

"Don't!" she said.

"Well, it shows how interesting they are. And the chronicler adds: 'These affairs usually take place when the limes ripen.'"

Her face of disgust showed no interest in the Sumatrans.

"Then what are you going to do?"

"Think of somewhere else, I suppose, but it isn't easy. You see I'm cleared out by that Mongolian trip, and the book has barely paid its way. So I'm at the mercy of my 'pubs,' and they care for nothing off the—well, the *half-beaten* track. Can't you suggest somewhere?"

"Your own country," she said. "I'm sure your ignorance of it is abysmal."

"It is," he smiled, "and it would be amusing coming across all the savage customs disguised as civilization and Christianity. But don't they rook you awfully at country inns?"

"Well, you can't do it for nothing. How poor really are you?"

"Poor as St. Francis," he replied; "poorer, for I haven't his saintly sustenance, or the prospect of a charitable bowl."

"You'd be too proud to reach out a hand for it."

"Not I," he said. "I'd take anything I could get."

"From a woman?"

He looked at her through narrowed lids, but she stared straight at him.

"With herself, do you mean?"

"Oh, well, how else?" she smiled.

"Marry?" he mused.

"You say that as if it was some new form of swindling I had invented."

"Yes," he said. "That's rather how it sounded."

"Oh," she assured him lightly, "it will never sound like that to a woman who loves you."

"You think she'd prefer to have one—anyhow?"

"I'm sure of it," she said.

His lids came even closer together; hers, as if disdaining shelter, moved even wider apart.

"Speaking from experience?" he asked.

"Yes," she said. "Experience of other women."

"That wasn't what I asked," he objected.

"No," she agreed; "but it's probably of more use to you."

"It's not of any use to me," he answered. "What a woman knows of other women never is to a man. She doesn't see his side of them."

"His side?" she queried.

"Yes," he said. "A woman's like the moon. When she begins to revolve round the bit of earth that attracts her she never turns more than one side of her to his inquiring eye."

She smiled.

"And the rest of us only see the other."

He nodded.

"Especially if you're revolving, too," he said.

She smiled again.

"But so you get both?" she suggested.

"Yes," he admitted, "but the human eye, and particularly the admiring male one, isn't made for circular views. One side of the moon is quite as much as it can manage."

"You think if you could see both sides of a woman you might possibly have a fit?"

"I don't know," he said, "but we probably wouldn't have the woman."

"No," she agreed gravely, "in matrimony men certainly aren't of an adventurous spirit. You prefer, like your publishers, the *half-beaten* ways."

"I imagine it's hardly for you to say so," he objected.

Her eyebrows were interrogative.

"I don't understand the allusion," she said.

"Do you think of yourself as suggesting 'half-beaten ways' to men?"

"Do I suggest them to you?" she asked.

"Sumatra seems a London suburb by comparison," he told her. "Yet, don't you spend a good part of your time warning off the adventurous?"

"Who's your informant?" she asked.

"Our hostess. She seemed to regard you as a sort of box-office refusing admission to a waiting queue of men."

"House full. Standing-room only," she smiled. "Poor Lady Grantham to be saddled with such a simile! Did she suggest that as a reason?"

"That the house *was* full? That your heart was already occupied by all that it could hold?" He shook his head. "No! She seemed to think that your seating-capacity, so to speak, ended with the foyer."

"What a complicated way of calling me heartless," she mused. "Fraudulently heartless, with no house to excuse the suggestion of a play."

"Oh, she didn't appear to consider an excuse needed," he explained. "She admires you tremendously. She as good as said that beauty like yours could dispense with performances. Yes, she thought you heartless, but with a sort of hint that one couldn't have everything, and that a man might think himself lucky to get even the chance of being refused."

"You should chasten that Celtic embroidery of yours," she said.

"Oh, but I assure you!" he protested. "There's nothing so complacently extravagant as one woman's admiration of another, unless it's her abuse. Lady Grantham meant every word of it. Beside a proper tribute to your beauty men were dust in the balance. It made me feel a mean worm for having monopolized a whole hour of it yesterday without—"

"Without what?" she prompted.

"Did you think of offering me an I O U?"

"How, if I had, should I have re-deemed it," he asked, the smile which had come at her questions fading off his face. "Except, as at present, in the debtor's usual way, by getting deeper into debt."

She offered his enigma no solution; but the eyes smoldered that were fixed upon his face.

"What have I done that you should say things like that to me?" she demanded.

"What have I said?" he asked, startled by the tenseness of her tone.

"Getting deeper into debt—to *me*!" she echoed contemptuously. "As if you cared, even if you could imagine yourself owing a woman anything!"

He stopped scuffling.

"I owe you a great deal more than I can tell you," he said gravely.

"Than you can tell me?" she repeated with the same light disdain. "I shouldn't really have thought, after all I've been hearing, that there was anything you couldn't. But how like a man to avoid so plausibly, where a woman's concerned, not only paying his debt to her, but even admitting it."

"You know," he pleaded, deeply disturbed, "there *are* things a man can't say to a woman."

"I should think so indeed," she retorted, wheeling on his defense. "There's very little he *can* that she wants to hear. He can make fun of her beauty—"

"Make fun!" he interjected.

"What else have you been doing?" she asked. "It amused you to see other men succumbing to an attraction that left you cold."

"Cold!" he exclaimed.

"Oh, well," she conceded, "I'm not speaking of absolute zero. You may even have admired it, too, for all I know, but it didn't move you to the absurdity of desiring to possess it. You had every reason to feel superior to that 'waiting queue of men'"—her voice grew unsteady despite the cool scorn of it—"to whom I was handing out refusals."

He looked at her, perplexed, uncertain, even a little angered. The challenge of her disdain had changed everything between them.

The easy friendliness with which he had been speaking seemed altered by the proud head with its drooped eyelids in front of him to something discourteous and uncomfortable. He felt hard; he resented, too, that this unfair advantage only made her look more distinctively handsome.

"Had I?" he retorted. "I wasn't conscious of it. Love doesn't seem to me so insane a thing that an escape from it should make one 'feel superior.' And I don't see why you should assume that every one who doesn't propose to you has escaped from it."

At his very mention of love her eyes softened; he used the word with so sincere a reverence.

"What do you mean?" she said.

"Did you suppose that every man in the queue was in love with you?" he asked almost brutally.

She shook her head.

"Then why conclude that every man out of it wasn't?" he continued.

"A man always tries to get what he wants," she said, but more humbly.

"Oh, no, he doesn't," he rejoined. "He sometimes has the grace to find his wants preposterous, and puts them away."

"Even when what he wants is a woman?" she asked softly.

"Even when it's a woman," he returned decidedly. "Especially when it's a woman with no end of a fortune, who's immoderately lovely, and obviously predestined for the great places of the earth."

"What's the woman to do in such a case?" she sighed.

"What woman?" he inquired.

"The woman who loves him."

"Loves him!" he exclaimed, startled. "I wasn't thinking of that."

"No," she said. "You wouldn't be. But couldn't you think of it?"

His answer came to her previous question.

"I don't know what she could do," he said.

"*Couldn't* you think of it?" she repeated.

"You say that," he parried nervously, "as if belief in a woman's love were almost impossible for a man."

"I think it almost is—for you," she said.

"It's a proof, isn't it," he smiled, "how small are one's deserts when one can't conceive their being rewarded?"

She looked at him and his attempt at lightness with a lowering eye.

"What did you mean," she said after a moment, during which only the sweep of the feathered sculls disturbed the night silence, "by saying that every man who proposed wasn't in love with me?"

"I apologize!" he murmured.

"Thanks!" she returned indifferently. "I asked what you meant."

He gave her a glance of deprecating appeal, but she paid no heed to it.

"Men are rather apt to take too rosy a view of their affections," he suggested diffidently, "where a woman is wealthy as well as charming."

"What a roundabout way of saying they'd have married me for my money," she sighed. "Are you speaking of the whole species?"

"How could I be?" he replied.

"Then there may possibly be men," she questioned, "whose affections aren't complicated by their worldly wisdom?"

"Very possibly," he conceded.

"There might even be men so fearful of seeming mercenary that they wouldn't let themselves fall in love with a rich woman?"

"It's just conceivable," he replied.

"Or if they had been so unlucky as to fall in love with her, would take care to keep the misfortune to themselves—or even *from* themselves?"

"There might be such men," he admitted.

"Are you one of them?" she asked quietly.

He looked over his shoulder as if he expected to see some craft bearing down upon us.

"Don't you think it's getting rather chilly?" he suggested.

"Not at this end of the boat," she an-

swered, loosening the veil of silvery gauze so that it slid off her shoulders. "Are you one of them?" she repeated.

He pulled on thoughtfully.

"How should I know?" he said.

"The evidence isn't going to be used against you," she suggested encouragingly; "of course it's only a supposed case. No one who knows you would imagine you foolish enough to fall in love. But if you had, and the lady happened to have money, and you were still as poor as St. Francis, you'd take care she never got an inkling of your love?"

"Probably," he admitted.

She leaned forward, her wrists upon her knees. The starlight sparkled in her eyes, the night laid its pallor on her white shoulders, and made almost lustrous the dense coils of her hair.

Bent as she was toward him—the small proud head burgeoning from the lovely lines that curved from her throat over breast and shoulder—the heart of her warm beauty seemed held to him like some splendid flower, bound in its black and silver sheath. There seemed something of its presentation, too, in the tone of her objection.

"Even if she were in love with you?"

"Oh, that wouldn't make any difference," he told her.

"And you knew it?" she persisted.

"I probably shouldn't," he replied.

"No, I think that very likely," she agreed ironically. "A woman would have to do something dreadful to open your eyes to the state of her affections. So that if the poor thing, the poor rich thing, I mean, happened to be unhappy enough to fall in love with you she could only hope to break your stupid silence by throwing herself at your head?"

He bent over the sculls, as if to escape from her eyes.

"Don't!" he murmured.

"But I'm going to," she assured him, with a pretense of gaiety, "if you will have it that there's no other way. Even the shame that makes a woman wish she had bitten her tongue out is better than the silence that eats out her heart." She looked at him, smiling, but with unsteady lips. "How little courage I have

rambling on like this, hoping soon to come to something you'll have to take as a cue."

But it was a sudden sob in her brave voice which broke down his silence.

"Hush, hush!" he said, letting go the sculls as he knelt before her, and took her nervously entwined fingers into his hand.

For just a perceptible instant he seemed to hesitate; then he bowed his head and kissed the hands which had yielded all their intentness to his pressure. He looked up at her, and smiled.

"Lionel!" she whispered, leaning down to him till her cheek was touched by his lips. If the long shivering sob which his kiss seemed to draw out of the depths of her, stirred him with penitent misgivings they were soothed again by the sigh of satisfaction with which she settled her dark head against his.

"How could you be so unkind?" she murmured.

"Isn't it early to reproach me?" he asked whimsically.

"With what?" she questioned.

"Being brought to my knees," he smiled.

"Don't!" she pleaded, hurt at such a moment by the mere breath of a jest.

"But you deserve it," he told her. "You said the evidence wouldn't be used against me."

"Against you!" she pouted, but with infinite content, her smooth cheek lightly brushing his. "Against you, indeed! Getting the woman you love?"

"Oh, I haven't told her that," he protested.

"No," she whispered happily, "but I think it's high time you began."

He seemed to think so, too, for he seated himself beside her in the stern—which, slim as they both were, lifted my unhappy nose into the air—and slipped his arm about her shoulder.

"We're drifting, you know," he said, glancing over my sunk gunwale at the water.

"Oh, no, we're not!" she breathed, her eyes lifted to the sparkling splendor of the stars. "God's in His heaven! We're under way at last!"

The Price She Paid

Campbell Mac Culloch



O you are his wife." Helen Charteris smiled, puzzled at the situation in which she found herself. "Why did you wish to see me?"

"Was his wife," corrected the other woman gently. "I believe the decree was granted in Philadelphia some days ago, so there is nothing to prevent you becoming Mrs. Philip Harmon, you see."

"But why did you come here?" asked Miss Charteris.

"Curiosity, I think. A desire to see what you were that I was not, perhaps," replied the other gravely.

"And now you see."

"Yes, I see."

Helen Charteris was quick to detect the indefinite quality in the tone.

"But don't understand, eh?" laughed the actress. She was beginning to enjoy the situation with a keen appreciation of its dramatic qualities.

"I don't blame you," she went on. "I don't myself, you know." And she fell to studying her visitor with an earnestness equal to her own.

They were a contrast. The wife—that was—tall, blond, regal in her carriage; with soft hazel eyes that stared with disquieting frankness straight before her; young, well-formed and gowned appropriately. The other a trifle shorter, dark, brown-eyed and quite as frank; good-humored, and yet with a hint of hardness; supple, well-cared for and of a languid grace, concealed yet accentuated by the tea-gown she wore. Placed together one might

hesitate; apart and surely no man might choose.

"I wanted to see if possible why you had succeeded where I had failed," said Mrs. Harmon at last.

"And you don't see," smiled Helen Charteris. "I'll be truthful with you. I don't, either. You look as well as I, if not better. You're younger, I'll be bound," she finished critically.

"But you are of the stage. You have arts—"

"Twaddle, my dear woman," interrupted the other. "Pure twaddle. You have as many arts as I—more, I dare say. I don't know why I should talk to you like this. It doesn't seem quite—er—decent, does it? However, I'll say this: I did not know he was married."

"Would it have made any difference?" asked Mrs. Harmon.

"It would. A lot."

"Yet the end seems the same."

"Oh, I know you don't believe me, but it's true," cried Helen Charteris quickly, and resentfully. "Perhaps I deserve it, but I want no married men dangling after me. It's dangerous. I can't afford it."

"I had heard it was an added charm," murmured Mrs. Harmon.

"It is to some. Not yours truly. I have a reputation at stake. But for you it would be full of holes by now I am afraid. I'm grateful, too. You refused to apply for a divorce, didn't you?"

"I don't believe in divorce," said the other gently. "And there was no reason why I should want one. With me there is no other."

"You mean?"

"I shall never marry again. Perhaps I am old-fashioned." And she smiled sadly.

"I see," said Miss Charteris reflectively. "What God hath joined, eh?"

"Yes, that's it. Besides, there's the boy."

"Are you going to keep him—I mean, can you keep him?" asked the actress in quick surprise. "Forgive me, but since he got the divorce on the ground of desertion, won't the child be given to him?"

"It has been," said Mary Harmon quietly.

"Then I'm afraid I don't understand," said Helen, puzzled.

"It's very simple. The child has gone away. You understand. You see, I never was able to bring myself to look upon even a Philadelphia Solomon with resignation." And her eyes twinkled ever so slightly.

"But won't they find him?"

"I think not. I've taken every precaution."

"But you might be followed—from here."

"I might," said Mrs. Harmon slowly, "but I don't think you would do that."

"Meaning I ought to be satisfied with the father, I suppose," commented the girl, with a slight sneer.

"Not altogether. Tell me. Do you expect him—to-day, I mean?"

"No. You need not be alarmed at a meeting. I don't believe he imagines you are here in New York."

"Will you tell him?" asked Mary, bending forward.

"What do you think?" asked Miss Charteris quizzically.

"I don't think you will."

"Do you know, I don't think I will, either," said the actress, with a short laugh. "Come. Let's stop fencing. What did you really come for?"

"I told you. To see what you were that I was not. To discover if possible where I had failed," said Mrs. Harmon softly.

"And what have you discovered?"

"Do you want me to be plain with you?"

"Of course."

"Then, nothing. You are pretty; undeniably so. You have a charm of your own, but then a woman in my case is a poor judge. We feel blindly; we love blindly; we suffer blindly. Perhaps had I been able to say in what measure you pleased him more than I, it might have been that I could have kept him." Mary leaned back in her chair, a trifle paler for the moment, for it was not an easy thing, this interview.

"You are a strange woman, Mrs. Harmon," said Helen Charteris, after a pause. "If I could send him back to you, I would. Perhaps I can," she mused.

"But he loves you," cried Mary, in astonishment.

"Poof! He thinks he does," returned the other, with a smile. "I'll tell you something. By the way, do you appreciate slang?"

"Sometimes," replied Mary doubtfully.

"True, you're from Philadelphia," said Helen thoughtfully. "But this is very simple. In fact, it is almost a parable. It is a good thing to remember. When a man catches a car he ceases to run after it. Perhaps that applies to you as well as to me. Sometimes, if the conductor is amusing, he'll stay on the car."

"I see," said Mary reflectively. "The inference being that this particular conductor wasn't so amusing."

"Possibly. Now, see. You say you failed to hold your husband. Are you sure you did everything to keep him, after you had won him?"

"I don't think I understand," said Mrs. Harmon, puzzled.

"It's hard to make some of you understand," said the actress, her voice taking on a deeper tone. "You marry, and you think that is the end. You bear a child, and perhaps that serves for a time in place of something you have forgotten. When he talks you listen, but how often do you understand what he says? How far do you try to take his view of the things that count—to him? Mainly you are of one idea. Even a husband and a father tires of that idea in time. He may turn else-

where for what he misses at home. You rail at us of the stage, and wonder what men see in us, the painted creatures. Don't I know? Shall I tell you? We study to please, some of us, and we talk of everything that you do not, particularly avoiding the subject of teeth, even baby ones."

"I think——"

"Wait!" She raised a protesting hand. "I know what you are going to say. That women have their rights, too. My dear, in effect they do, but in reality they don't. The man makes the home, and he is after all supreme. There are women fit to rule, but they are not fit for marriage, believe me."

Mrs. Harmon remained silent for a time, and then said:

"You will marry him, of course, and having such views you will hold him, naturally."

"That is a question; first, whether I shall marry him, and second, whether I should be able to hold him, even knowing what I do," said Miss Charteris soberly. "The onlooker sees so much more of the game than those who play."

Mary Harmon fell to studying her rival again, her scrutiny being returned with interest. Finally she said:

"I don't think I've been quite fair with you. I had two objects in coming here. The first I told you; the second was to plead perhaps, after I had seen you."

"For him?" asked Helen.

"No. For my boy. I'll never give him up willingly."

"But what have I to do with this?" asked the actress.

"I'm hoping for your interest—your influence. I did not defend the suit, and you owe me something on that count. Perhaps it was because I could not bring myself to strip my feelings before the crowd, but let that pass. I want to keep my boy, and I thought you might induce his father not to insist on having him."

"And if I try?" asked the other.

"I'll pray for you that you may have better fortune with your husband than I had with mine."

Miss Charteris dropped her chin into her upturned palm, and seemed to turn the matter over in her mind. Mary Harmon sat silent, waiting, and then she said:

"You may have a child yourself some day, and then you will know what it means to live in fear that he may be taken from you; to be afraid to leave him for a moment lest he be missing when you return; to lie awake at night speculating on what the world would hold for you when he had gone; or whether he would be taken care of by those into whose hands he might fall, or be neglected, ill-used, and his slender chance for life minimized still further. Some day you may understand."

The other woman was looking at her with renewed interest.

"Do you know," she said, "you almost tempt me to marry. It must be worth something to feel as you do; to know the emotion that comes with motherhood; to feel that no sacrifice is too great, no suffering too acute for that small life that is growing up beside you. I have read its meaning in books; have played a semblance of its feeling upon the stage, but I don't think I ever understood before—in your way. You plead well."

"Even a rat will fight for its young," said Mrs. Harmon.

"Yes, but that is instinct. There's no reason in it; no foreknowledge of results; no known consequences to follow. Tell me, would you sacrifice much to keep your boy?"

"Everything."

"That's a large order," mused the girl. "It means much. Suppose your reputation was at stake. Imagine that circumstances arose that necessitated the sacrifice of your good name."

"Even that would I give for my son," smiled Mrs. Harmon sadly.

"You've shown me something I never knew before," said Helen Charteris slowly. "You see we of the stage are really counterfeits. We express many emotions and many passions, but they don't belong to ourselves. Take love, for instance. Stage love may be convincing to the audience, but it is only a

presentment after all, and the degree of conviction depends upon the quality of the talent used to express it. Do you see? Then, perhaps the actress falls in love. It may be the real thing or it may be but a reflex from the presentment. How is she to judge? Her experience is drawn from her education. For years she has made stage love. How is she to know?"

"She is a woman. She has a heart," returned Mrs. Harmon, interested in a phase of life that was new to her.

"Yes. She has a heart," said the actress pensively. "That is, if it has not been theatricalized out of her. Her standards are not those of other women. She lives in a looking-glass, you see—like Alice—and her comparisons are false. Instinctively, by reason of her training, she judges by ephemeral standards."

"Do you love my—Mr. Harmon?" asked Mary quickly.

"I can't tell you, my dear woman," answered Miss Charteris. "Before I knew he was married he interested me. There was something direct and wholesome about him that appealed to me. Now—I don't know. Perhaps he's nothing but an idea. He may be all I imagined, and he may not. That's why when you asked me if I should marry him, I dodged."

"But he loves you."

"I'm not sure of that, either. I'm different from the women he has known. The chances are that he is attracted by the stage side of me. Tear away the tinsel and turn off the lime-light, and he would find me very ordinary indeed."

"Then how will you know?"

"I'm learning to know, now. That's one reason I let you come up. When I saw your card I was going to refuse. Then I thought I'd like to see the woman who had won him, and use her as a comparison." Miss Charteris smiled a little.

"You forget. I failed to keep him," said Mrs. Harmon.

"But you won him first, you know. Just now he's looking at things through

a crinkled glass. Full of resentment against you, he's seeking opposites."

"I don't think I've done anything to cause resentment," objected Mary childishly.

"Of course not. He's done it. Therefore he is angry with you. It's human nature," returned Helen. "That is why I am beginning to feel I can't trust him; why I can't trust myself. I am looking in a mirror; he through a crinkly glass. His sense of proportion is warped by anger; mine by the education of my profession. Suppose in a year from now we both become normal, or only one of us for that matter. Don't you see the danger?"

"I see what you mean, I think," said Mrs. Harmon slowly. "I'm glad I came."

"And I'm glad you came," agreed Helen Charteris. "I've learned something from you. I don't know that any other two women have ever done this thing under such circumstances; for it's odd, bizarre in fact, but I believe we're big enough to make the most of it, and profit by it. Now I want you to tell me something, truly. Do you still love Philip Harmon?"

Mrs. Harmon looked at her and hesitated. It was a curious question, coming from the source it did, but after all, not more curious than the situation. The woman before her she had heard of often, but until this afternoon had never seen. By all feminine standards she should distrust her; hate her, for she had done the unforgivable thing; and yet, on the other hand, there was much about her that was likable. She seemed straightforward and outspoken, this creature of the stage.

In her own heart Mary knew the truth. She loved Philip with every fiber of her being. Body and soul she belonged to him as long as she should live, and she knew that there could never be another. She loved him, too, as the father of the boy, but whether she should show that love to the other woman—

She—the other—had taken him away. Perhaps unwittingly, but taken him none the less. She might keep him, or

she might do as she had hinted; send him back. By all her code of ethics she knew that she should not receive him, even though he came willingly and contritely; and yet, in her heart of hearts, she knew that if he could come, her old Philip, she would take him gladly. How the break had come, by what insidious process the wall between them had been builded, she could not say. She only knew that it had arisen, almost in a night. And then this other woman had come suddenly, and Philip had turned to her.

Perhaps she had failed to interest him. Possibly she had been wrapped too closely in that newer, budding life, and hers was the fault, but surely, nothing she had done, or failed to do, was excuse for stealing her boy from her; she knew that, and she would fight for him to the last bitter drop. Slowly she lifted her eyes to Helen Charteris.

"You ask me if I love him," she said gently. "I will be quite frank with you. I do. I love him, even now, better than anything but the boy. But should he do this thing, should he take my child from me, then I should hate him. Every particle of love would leap into the other scale. I can hate, too, I think, for I am proud."

"I believe you," said the actress.

"There's nothing I would stop at to keep Tommy with me," went on Mary Harmon, more to herself than to the other. "I don't know what might be demanded of a woman in such case, but I'd meet it, somehow."

"I told you I didn't know whether I cared for Mr. Harmon or not," said Helen Charteris, at length. "That's true; but it's also true that even if I did I could never care as you do. You've given me a glimpse of things I didn't know existed, and you'd pay the price. I think he'll go back, if you will have him; not just now, but later, when he gets that crinkled glass straightened out. In any case, I know this: I don't want him, but he'll have to find that out."

"I think I understand," said Mrs. Harmon. "You've helped me. I came here to see what you were, and—I thank you."

She stepped forward impulsively and took the girl's hand, holding it in both her own. For a moment they looked each other in the eyes, and Mrs. Harmon said:

"I'm going now. Some day you may need a friend. You can always come to me, whatever happens. I didn't expect to say that when I came, but I mean it. Good-by."

When she had gone Helen Charteris stood where she had risen from the chair.

"She's thoroughbred, all right," she murmured. "Clean straight through, and she'll pay, whatever it is. I wouldn't care to be Philip Harmon though, if he goes too far. She's got that look about her."

Mary Harmon went home slowly, and by a circuitous route, for the price of her boy was concealment and she would take no risks. Twice as she changed cars, here or there, she had an uneasy feeling that the unobtrusive individual her eyes had chanced upon was vaguely familiar, but whether she had seen him before that day, or where, she could not say. Then she dismissed the matter from her mind as of no importance, for she wished to think of the interview of that afternoon.

As she walked to her apartment-house the uneasy feeling again possessed her, so that, instead of turning directly in by the entrance, she kept on to the corner and then hurried down the side street and in by the tradesmen's door. Hardly had she disappeared than the shabby, unobtrusive individual looked furtively about the corner and smiled, for he saw the small door and noted there was no other in sight by which she could have gone. The game was run to earth.

In her own rooms Mary Harmon sat down to reconstruct the events of the past few months. As the other woman had said, perhaps she had lived too much for the child, and the father had been made to feel an exclusion that was unintentional, though possibly real. It might be, too, that she had neglected those things that were very vital to him, and she thought with a sigh that

he must have tried to bear patiently with her for a time.

This view of the case was not other than illumining, and by its light she could trace things back to their inception; the silence that had come when he had realized that he was now of secondary importance; the restlessness that had been so inexplicable then, but which seemed so plain now; the gradual drawing apart, and her feeling that he was tiring of her, which had been such a grievous hurt to her pride and to her heart. Now she realized that had she but stretched out her hand in those earlier days she might have held him back. Instead, she had withdrawn into herself, and toward the end, when she had made overtures, he had found other interests and had struck the proffering aside.

She could see very clearly, too, that he had not been above reproach, and that he had set out very deliberately along a road that was edged with selfishness, and now it was too late to begin again. He had flown into a rage at her refusal to ask for a divorce, and when she had left him had announced his intention of getting one himself.

All through it had been cold, unbending pride, and this had turned into the blind anger that leads one to hurt the thing that once was loved. Over and over again she went through the parting scene with that persistency the mind is capable of, until at last she shook the thing off and got up to bathe her eyes.

As she crossed the room she heard the tinkle of the electric bell, and her heart jumped slightly at the mandatory summons. Then she quieted herself, but it was with a cold fear clutching at her that, three minutes later, she stood facing a tall policeman who was trying to explain that he had the authority to take her and the child to the nearest police court, the charge being something technically beyond her, but none the less compelling. Dumbly she understood that Philip was taking the first step to wrest the boy from her, and subconsciously she understood that should she manage to retain possession that day, there would be other attempts less legal

in their form, but perhaps more effective.

Still dazed by the suddenness of it all, she managed to telephone her lawyer to meet her at the court, and then prepared to accompany the officer. He had thoughtfully provided a carriage, and during the short drive she recalled that first time she had driven to meet Philip Harmon.

Arrived, she was ushered in by a side door and given a chair in the Charities room. Newspaper reporters smoking pipes and cigarettes instantly put them aside and doffed their hats in instinctive recognition, and then proceeded to put the good-humored policeman, who had brought her, upon the grill. Once she caught a glimpse of Philip as he paced nervously by in the passage, and her heart thrilled for an instant, but again grew cold as she realized what their meeting must mean.

To her came her lawyer and brought cold comfort, for he could see nothing toward relief but an adjournment, and that would be difficult, if not impossible, to secure. Still he administered what encouragement he could, to be surprised by the smile she gave him, and went away puzzled, for the impression he had gleaned was not one that betokened despondency, but purpose.

Outside she could hear the hum and monotony of the machine that in the name of Justice was blindly grinding human souls in its capacious maw, and the fetid atmosphere made her faint. Through the open door she could see the sad procession of the hopeless—the food for the machine; the women, the men, who had set foot upon this or that tradition, some wicked, some unknowing, but all impressed with a sense of Fate, as personified by the magistrate upon the bench; not Justice, be it known, but Fate.

She saw, too, a squalid woman; a female wreck, clothes awry, pushed and pulled by two men in uniform, and screaming curses as she went. Following her was a youth with crime and lust deeply lined into his face, and instinctively she drew the child behind her.

A moment more and the lawyer came

to tell her she was needed. Following him, she walked into the space behind the iron railing and before the platform where countless others had stood before her. As she entered leading the child there was a suppressed stir behind her, for her kind was not a frequent visitor there, and she dimly noted the two knots of men gathered at each side of the magistrate's desk.

Philip stood with his lawyer a little to one side. He looked pale and worn, but there was a grimness about his mouth that hurt her. He glanced toward her and bowed formally, and soon she became conscious of an undercurrent of sound that resolved itself into a statement of the case from Philip's lawyer. The white-bearded spectacled magistrate listened attentively—for once—and the reporters made furtive dabs at the folded pieces of paper in their hands.

Then the magistrate turned to her, and at first his voice sounded far off, but she understood that he was asking her questions. Her name, how long she had been married, her boy's age, and so on through an apparently interminable list.

At last he turned away and directed other questions at Philip and his lawyer, and she heard him say:

"It's a great pity, but what can I do?"

Her lawyer leaned over the desk and spoke in a low tone for some minutes, to be met with replies and objections from the other attorney. Finally the magistrate beckoned her upon the platform, and when room had been made for her, said:

"Mrs. Harmon, I am in a measure powerless, for I am here to interpret the law. While it is acknowledged you are the mother of the child, it is also shown that the Pennsylvania courts have given the boy in custody of his father. By removing him from the jurisdiction of that court you have in effect been guilty of contempt. Unless extradition papers are brought to me, which is not at all likely, I cannot hold you on that charge, and would be forced to discharge you, but unfortunately Mr.

Harmon's counsel tells me he is prepared to make and substantiate a charge of larceny against you, and on that charge I should be compelled to hold you, while I realize it is a technicality. As the matter stands, you must either give up the child to his father or be committed on this charge if it is made. I want you to understand your position, and that is why I am explaining at this length."

She was silent, overwhelmed for a moment. Her mouth seemed dry and she moistened her lips before she could trust herself to speak. Then she said:

"In either case I must give up the boy?"

"In either case. If you should elect to stand out he would be turned over to the natural guardian appointed by the court."

"And the law can take my son from his mother?" She was strangely calm now, and seemed careless of the questioning looks that were bent upon her.

"Only in the way I have explained," said the magistrate.

"But I would lose him." Her eyes took on a curious gleam. It may be that the martyrs led to the stake felt as she did and looked the same measure of exaltation. "Then I must say it is a cruel and an unjust law," she went on, her voice rising clearly.

She stopped and seemed to hesitate, then she raised her eyes and spoke again.

"Should it be shown that he," she indicated Philip, "had no authority to do what you say he may do, would this cruel law still insist?"

She paused, and there was a breathless silence about her. The magistrate leaned forward and said:

"You mean?"

"That he is not the father of my boy," she finished resolutely, as one who has come to a decision.

For a moment the tension held. Then Philip, haggard, horror-struck, unbelieving, sprang forward, brushing aside the court attendants, and seized her by the arm.

"Mary! Mary! For God's sake, what are you saying?" he cried convulsively,

madly; but she held steadfast, clear purpose shining in her honest eyes, and faced the magistrate.

"Can your law take my child away from me now?" she asked insistently.

The magistrate looked into her face, and his voice was grave as he spoke.

"Mrs. Harmon," he said, "do you realize what you are doing?"

"Perfectly," she answered, the hectic color mounting in her cheeks.

"And have you thought what it means to you and to—your son?"

"I have counted it," she said steadily. "I will pay."

"It is a heavy price, believe me," he went on.

"I have considered it," she returned.

The magistrate sighed. He was an old man with grown sons and daughters of his own, and he was used to human affliction—hardened to it possibly—but he knew, as did every man that looked into the woman's face, that she was lying; lying loyally, honestly; and the magnificence of it touched him.

"Will you oblige me by stepping into my private room?" he said, rising, and then glanced at the knots of men on each side.

"You boys of the press," he said, "I want you to do me a favor. You know me, I think—some of you at least. I want you to hold this up a while. I know what it means to each of you, but this is different. There's something here beside a story, and I want you to wait a bit—not long—as a personal favor to me. Will you do it?"

There was a moment's silence, and they glanced at one another, then came a guttural chorus of assents.

"Will you step this way, Mrs. Harmon?" he said. "The sergeant will show you." And he went off through the door, while the old policeman led Mary and her boy through the wire gate at the right.

Philip, stunned, overcome with the

horror of it, had sunk upon the witnesses' bench behind him, and covered his face with his hands. It was too horrible, this thing. Too unbelievable. Through his mind there raced the events of the past few months, and he saw a picture of himself as he was. It was as if some one had uncovered a pit and he had seen the loathsome things within. The realization of himself came with a shock, as to a sleeper who had been precipitated into icy waters; and he had awakened, gasping.

About him the excited hum and buzz of conversation, unchecked, went on, and as he raised his head to see the looks bent upon him he knew what a fool he had been; what an utter, hopeless brute. He was conscious of a touch upon his arm, and turned to see the gray-haired sergeant at his elbow.

"The judge wants a word with you," the officer said, and Philip rose unsteadily and followed him through the gate. In the passage he found the magistrate.

"My boy," said the old man, laying a hand upon his shoulder, "I've seen a lot of women, all kinds, but never one like her. I know your case. It's been here before, hundreds of times, and I think you see, too, now. There are lengths to which it is unwise to drive a woman, and you have driven too hard and too fast. You know she lied. I know it, and— Go in there. She's waiting for you, you damned young fool!"

He pushed Philip through the door and turned back to the court-room. Sitting down in his chair, he took his glasses from his nose, and wiped the moisture from them. Then he turned to the impatient, questioning groups and smiled.

"Gentlemen," he said unevenly, "that was a mistake. The liar has repented. I don't think there will be any story. Call the next case, sergeant."

SAN'S FAMILLE



BY
Roy
Norton



He came to Holcomb quietly and unobtrusively, with a large tag carefully tied round his left arm bearing a printed legend which bore evidence of laborious painstaking on the part of some one not entirely acquainted with the English tongue. It read as follows:

These boy are nine year old and orphing. Hes fathaire are Michel Lafayette, who work in Holcomb. She's big camp in Sierra Madre. These boy have billet in enveloppe to go to see hes fathaire. Be kind and shove heem along, *s'il vous plait*. Hes name is Jean Guillot Lafayette.

And Jean Guillot Lafayette, a pathetic little figure, worn by long journeying in steerage, second-class railway-coaches and bumping stages, bore ample marks that the instructions had been literally followed and that he had undergone much "shoving along." He was the last to alight from the interior of the old Concord when, with shrilling brake and loud clattering halt, it stopped before the "Gold Digger," and he was so stiff and sore from constant jolting that he almost fell when his wooden sabots struck the ground. He straightened himself up, drew his grotesquely big cloak around him, and peered from beneath his chapeau with bright, fearless, inquiring eyes at the group of miners who surrounded him.

He was a curiosity to them, in his peasant garb which smacked so strongly of the provinces of far-away France, and beside, he was the first boy to invade this camp high up in the hills where men wrought for gold, fought

for it and then with equal fervor gambled or danced it away when the day's work was done.

"A mighty little cuss to come so far alone," commented the stage-agent as he looked from the letter of instruction in his hand to the boy. "Ain't none of us here, I reckon, ever done no such travelin'."

"Might git him to give a lecture," some one suggested, and others passed equally facetious remarks; but through it all Jean Guillot Lafayette, still studying the faces around him, stood mute.

The sun had set some time before, painting the top of solemn Old Baldy's snow-cap a warm red and filling the summer air of the dead day with a singular languorous quietude. Thus it was that when the stage-agent vented an exclamation on reading the tag on the traveler's arm it was heard by all. He stood away from the lad, shoved the brim of his hat back with an awkward gesture, and stared in perturbation at the others of the group.

"Good Lord!" he ejaculated in distress. "Good Lord!" while the men of the hills looked at him questioningly.

"Boys," he said, "this little feller was sent for."

They shifted on their feet, some of them taking a step or two forward, and waited for the agent to continue.

"Mike Lafayette was his father." They grew suddenly quiet. "And I expect the reason the boy came is because his folks in France is all dead. The tag says he's an orphan."

"And God knows he's one now, for sure," muttered another.

"Anybody here who can talk French?"

The silence which followed indicated that no one spoke that vastly foreign tongue. Spanish would have been at their command, but French—no.

"How in the deuce are we to tell him that his daddy—you all knew him—was killed in a cave-in almost a week ago?" the stage-agent began; but that difficulty was unexpectedly overcome by the boy himself, who spoke for the first time.

"Eet ees to say, monsieur," he said in painstaking English, "zat I now have no fathaire to meet? That he is *mort*? My fathaire Michel Lafayette is keeled?"

He had planted himself squarely before the stage-agent, selecting him as the man in authority. His capot had been thrown back with one wide appealing gesture until its two flapping ends rested across his shoulders, exposing his sturdy brown legs and voluminous breeches of homely drill. His lips trembled vaguely and his serious brown eyes threatened a flood of tears.

The agent looked at him with a world of kindly sympathy, and then at the others. Jean stared at them one after another as if demanding an explanation, and each in turn dropped his eyes before this brave picture of misery.

The boy's hands, after one impulsive, halting movement toward his eyes, waved an expressive, open-fingered gesture of despair, dropped back to his sides and then clasped themselves together. He was learning to know and cross palms with tragedy, and with none to help him in his battle.

"Eet ees, then, that I, Jean Guillot Lafayette, am *sans famille*; that I have nossing—nos-sing—no one. *Voilà!*"

There was some bitter, vibrant undercurrent of grief in the plaintive, precise drawling of the "I have nos-sing, no one," that made a mournful appeal for sympathy, and with one impulse the men surged forward and surrounded him, those who were nearest dropping to a knee to bring their statures on a par. The first to proffer compassion and the one to whom the orphan turned after one quick comprehensive glance was big Andy Kendall. Not that Big

Andy was prepossessing, for he was of the gray-eyed, lean-jawed type that would scarcely be selected as sympathetic.

Jean's aplomb gave way to a tempest of tears as he sought refuge in the strong, shielding arms and buried his face against the broad, outstretched shoulder whose blue shirt pillowed his face. His ill-shapen peasant hat fell off unheeded when he was lifted clear of the ground as his protector stood erect.

"Boys," the miner announced, "I'm goin' to take the little cuss. He looks good to me, and I've got plenty of room up at my place."

It was so like a decision that they felt called upon to nod acquiescence, and opened out for him as he marched away up the hillside to his cabin in the dull of the evening, picking his way around boulders and carrying the boy who was *sans famille*. They stood without a word until they saw his door open and close, and then turned again to each other.

"Well I'll be hanged!" the agent said; and in this they concurred, finding great poverty of expression in such an unusual combination of circumstances. Besides, they were not men of much speech.

The coming of Jean Guillot Lafayette acted as a damper on Holcomb that night, and in the huge log dance-hall the singing of the fiddles and strumming of the guitars failed to evoke the usual hilarity. Even the games beneath their shaded tin lamps were poorly patronized, and the gentlemen who dealt them and garnered much thrift thereby joined the group which listened to all the stage-agent had to impart.

It was scant enough; merely that the boy had been handed over by the railway officials at Los Angeles, together with what was left of his ticket and a letter of instruction which had been passed from hand to hand in the course of its travels until it was begrimed and stained by many thumb and finger marks.

It was from the village curé of "Montigny sur Vingeanne," wherever that

might be. Anyway, it was in France, which was a long way off and a land of châteaux and fashions and fair women. Something so very far away as to have seemed only within the realm of dreams until this piece of flotsam had come to wreck in the high hills as an actual, tangible link that such a country existed in reality.

It was a kindly letter, in which the good old priest bared a portion of his heart in telling of the love he had long felt for "the *petit* Jean, whom I christened, and whose mother, a very good *femme* of excellent family, I had the pleasure of burying."

They couldn't quite understand the use of the word "pleasure," but passed it by as a slip of English. There was an undertone of vanity also in the naive statement that "he's good English speak, because have not I, the curé of Montigny sur Vingeanne, him taught? I who have traveled far and been to Angletorre?"

In this carefully worded epistle, too, much space was devoted to the virtues of Jean Guillot Lafayette, motherless for years and, worse yet, now fatherless. So it was they felt they knew the wayfarer's history well; but what to do with him? That was another question! Perhaps in the rude garish hall there were yearning hearts beneath painted faces which would have clutched eagerly for such guardianship, but they never had the opportunity. Some one suggested they should all "chip in" for the boy's support; but the collection was never taken.

Up in the cabin on the hill the arrival had sobbed himself to sleep in Kendall's arms long before the moon came up, and the camp had lost some of its interest and turned back to older ways in response to the seductive clicking of the roulette-balls and the strident invitation of the strings. Even in the shadow of distress it was neither fitting nor natural that everything should come to a halt because of an unwonted happening.

But Andy Kendall didn't come down from his cabin that night, nor was he thinking of the morrow's work and his

"diggings," the most prosperous of all, where twenty men answered his beck and call and tore for him from the earth the scales of potent gold. He sat on his threshold, totally unconscious of the softened music of the dance-hall in the flat below, and in the wreaths of smoke from his pipe built castles around Jean Guillot Lafayette.

When the sun approached in the morning and by its call awoke the thrumming life of the hills, Andy tiptoed from his bunk, and with stentorian splutterings washed his face in the tin basin just outside the cabin-door.

He was interrupted by a foreign salutation, "*Bon jour, monsieur*," and on peering up through the cascade of soapy water, which rivuleted from the brown mop of hair across his eyes, beheld his guest.

"Hello, young feller," he returned, with a kindly grin. "Feelin' better, are you? That's a good boy."

And then, his nose rubbed to a shining ruddiness by the aid of a coarse towel, he refilled the basin and extended a homely invitation for its use. He whistled as he busied himself frying crisp the long slices of bacon for their morning meal, and laughed when he discovered Jean watching in open-mouthed amazement the deftness with which he threw huge flapjacks into the air, turning and dexterously catching them in mid-flight as they fell.

"Eet ees vaire clevaire," remarked Jean in frank admiration. "Monsieur is *un bon* prestidigitator. He is what you call a zhugglure. Eh, is it not so? *Très bien!*"

Once again Kendall broke into a great hearty laugh, but it failed to provoke so much as a smile from the grave-eyed exile who merely looked astonished. They sat down to their breakfast together, and the boy answered questions with no abatement of seriousness. Apparently he was studying the problem of this new life into which unkind Fate had thrown him, and coming to a conclusion. When his sparing meal was finished he drew his shoulders up with an inimitable little shrug of rare elegance and began:

"Monsieur—ah—pardon—I do not know your name?"

"Kendall. Andy Kendall," the miner rejoined, staring at his strange interlocutor with his open mouth pursed into something approaching a whistle of astonishment, while his gray eyes twinkled humorously.

"Ah, *merci*! Monsieur Andahkendal, I am now *sans famille*. I must the work get. The good *curé*"—and here his eyes suddenly filled with moisture at abruptly recalled memories of home—"the good *curé* said to me when I the long voyage start: 'Jean, my leetle son, remember zis: You must always pay as you go. Eet ees a long journey you take, all through your life eet ees a long journey. Sometimes the way ees hard; but, *mon cher*, you must always pay as you go; even if through your nose.'"

He paused and bravely blinked away the gathered tears, while the miner coughed loudly to conceal his own strangely intermingled desires to laugh and cry.

"Yes," he questioned, "and what now?"

"I am without family and must pay as I go," was the response in the same precise English.

"Don't you worry about that! You are goin' to live with me. You don't have to work. You're to be my son, and—"

"But eet ees not my fathaire you are," interrupted his guest, with a slight tone of wistfulness, "and—and I must pay as I go."

Plainly Jean was declining adoption, although it appeared attractive. Big Andy made no reply but ate steadily, lifting his eyes between mouthfuls to stare in kindly fashion at the boy who gave an equally frank and unabashed inspection to his host.

"Don't you like me, young feller?" Kendall asked as he folded his arms and leaned dangerously far back on the rear legs of his wooden stool.

Jean Guillot Lafayette slowly and with exactitude made parallel rows with his knife, fork and spoon across his plate, daintily wiped his fingers on the borders of his somewhat soiled hand-

kerchief and folded and placed it in his pocket before answering:

"Yes, Monsieur Andahkendal, I lak you vaire much. You are vaire big and kind; but—you eat the food wiz your knife."

There were great condemnation and reproof in his tone. Andy's arms unfolded, and his chair resumed its normal position on the floor while he gaped in open-mouthed astonishment at his monitor. Then with a shriek of amusement he doubled over the table. The boy, with the utmost gravity, as though fascinated by the widely open mouth and firm, white teeth, scrutinized him until he gained self-control and assumed a look of contrition.

"Do you think, General Lafayette," he said, "that if I were to stop knife-gobbling and try to be civilized again, you could conscientiously adopt me as a father?"

And Jean Guillot, after inquiring the exact definition of the unknown term, agreed that he would consider such a possibility, but politely added that he thought it might take some time to reach a conclusion. A strange dormant wisdom of fatherhood must have taught the big miner the right road to the little foreign heart which held him aloof and refused to enshrine him in a dead man's place, for from that minute he no longer urged the plan of adoption but treated with Jean Guillot on a different basis. He negotiated with him as a man, only the twinkling of his eyes betraying his discovery of humor in the situation.

"I'm a trifle short of help," he announced. "Now, you say you want to pay as you go. Well, I'll give you a chance; I'll hire you."

Jean Guillot became all attention, and with an unsmiling face watched him.

"I want to hire a man to carry water to the miners, and if you think you're strong enough I'll give you the job."

"Job? Job? What ees eet you would give me? What you call 'job', monsieur?"

"It's a—er—a situation. Employment."

"Ah! *Très bien!*"

"And I'll pay you an ounce a month, and you're to live here with me." He fathomed the look of perplexity and hastened to explain. "An ounce of gold is—let me see—I think it's about a hundred francs of your money, unless I've clean forgot all I learned when I was a kid."

The boy's eyes slowly opened until they were very big and round, and then relaxed into such a smile of delight that they were almost shut. It was a fortune, and the engagement was closed. And thus a water-carrier was installed into the workaday life of the Jumper Mine, which at first created much amusement for the rough but good-hearted gang who worked it.

True, the creek, clear and limpid and cool, ran directly through the ground and nearly always within reach; but when the situation was explained the men went athirst rather than cause grief and disappointment by declining to drink from the bright tin pail. If they resorted to the brook it was surreptitiously, and no one could ever forget the look of anguish in the carrier's eyes when he discovered this breach of etiquette; but he said nothing, for he was entirely undemonstrative and all of life with him was a very serious business.

In time he became "the general" by common consent. It seemed so eminently fitting that a Lafayette should be a general, and nothing less.

Once the general's industrious legs grew tired and he succumbed to the inviting shade of a big fir-tree which treacherously sang a song of the free winds and lulled him to sleep. It was hard to forgive himself for this lapse, and that night big Andy Kendall, smoking his pipe and reading one of those rare treasures, a month-old newspaper, heard a few small, whimpering sobs from his helper's bunk.

He went over and knelt beside it, tenderly reaching a long muscular arm across and drawing the general to him.

"What is it, old man?" he said in a voice of unaccustomed softness, fancying that desolation and homesickness were torturing his protégé. Perhaps they did have something to do with it.

The little hands slid slowly up around his neck, and he felt his heart beat with sheer delight, but he did not speak because he knew it was not the way. He bided his time until the general, stifling his sobs, vouchsafed an explanation.

"You will me no longer like, Monsieur Andahkendal, because, because I went to what you call pound my dam ear."

And the big miner, shuddering with suppressed laughter, assured him with many caresses that sleep was no crime, but was considered a water-carrier's inalienable prerogative and, indeed, a part of his bounden duty.

Andy Kendall underwent a subtle change after the arrival of the general. Before then he had gambled as did all men of Holcomb. Before then he had been known to drink when in the mood, and had blithely danced when so inclined; but now the mellow green of the layout and he were strangers, he seemed immune from drouth, and danced no more.

One speech of his, made but a day or two after the exile's arrival, was long remembered. It was when some of the women of the dance-hall ventured to protest against his laying full claim to the boy whom many would have taken to satisfy the ever hungry mother love. They unwisely asked, with reckless taunts and ill-timed jeers, by what right he had taken the lad.

"You want to know why I took him?" he snarled, backing up against the log wall and defiantly staring around. "I did it because I'm fitter to care for him than any of you, or any man in this camp."

There was a lull when he spoke, and it was a strained and breathless interval of suspense. The man was aroused and destructive, and was not good to look upon. He was a dangerous thing and seemed for the minute like a lean old wolf prepared to fight for his young. Those nearest drew back a little as he concluded:

"I took him, too, because I wanted him, and if there's any man here wants to jump my claim let him speak up now

and we'll have it out. We will, so help me God!"

The challenge was so vicious that it went unanswered not only then, but from that time on; nor was it jested about, for even brave men do not wantonly trifle with ready death. His guardianship of the kithless one was thus established and undisputed. Besides, as a distraction, there came other babies to the camp; two of them—both tiny girls—the elder scarcely more than five years of age, who in soiled pinafores rambled in and out among their mother's tubs, made mud-pies on the dumps, and occasionally upset the tenor of the camp by getting lost.

They were the offspring of a forlorn and dilapidated woman who introduced herself as the derelict of "Mike O'Shaughnessy, Hivin rist him, as good a la-ad as iver filled two shoes. A man, ivery inch of him, who hadn't a strake of maneness in him as wide as the black of your finger-nail."

And "thim O'Shaughnessy kids" dropped into the life of Holcomb as completely as had the general; but the latter bestowed more attention on them than did any one else.

Indeed, his little heart, with its burden of working responsibility, had longed for childish companionship, and with a gravely patronizing air he assumed a very paternal attitude toward the newcomers.

He seemed never quite to understand them; but enjoyed them purely in his own way. He would keep a constantly watchful eye on them as he passed on his regular rounds between the spring where he replenished his pail and the broad belt of placer-ground where he alleviated thirst; but nobody ever observed him at play with the O'Shaughnessys, as other children play, for he seemed too dignified and self-contained to indulge in the frivolities of ordinary frolic, and his enjoyment was apparently that of looking at them and supervising their various architectural efforts.

That they appreciated his interest was shown by the fact that they often transferred whole castles of mud to his front

door-step, and over them all Big Andy would step with solicitous care and a merry gleam of understanding in his eye. Only once in the long summer-time was the lad given a lecture.

"General," the miner said on that memorable evening, "what's this the big O'Shaughnessy girl's tellin' round the camp about your killin' a snake a few days ago? You ain't never said anything to me about it."

Jean Guillot Lafayette shrugged his shoulders and turned his hands palms outward with an inimitable gesture, but declined to talk until Kendall insisted.

"Eet was the evening in, Monsieur Andahkendal, and I follow the children up the gulch." This with an air of bashfulness. "Hah! They stop quickly. So!" And here he demonstrated by jumping to the floor and fixing his eyes with dramatic fervor on a charred spot, whereat the miner, carried away by the recountal, also stared.

"Z-z-z-r-r-r-rip!" the general's R's rolled quivering. "I r-r-run to them. Eet ees a vaire angry sairpent whose head move so!" Now his slender hand wove to and fro in distinct imitation of a rattler's head. "I seize the stone! I hurl it thus! *Voilà!* That ees all!"

"Monsieur Andahkendal" sat for a long time studying as to how he might explain the danger and death that lay in the serpent with the "Z-z-r-r-rip" on his tail, administer reproof for such recklessness, but at the conclusion of his homily was shocked by the discovery that the general's vocabulary, by camp contact, was becoming considerably enlarged.

"Eet ees not Monsieur Andahkendal who would say to Jean Guillot Lafayette: 'R-r-run away and let the sairpent eat the young ladies.' No, no, no, no! He, the gr-r-rand monsieur would say"—and here his voice assumed a great depth of hoarseness—"See him in hell first, Jean; see him in hell!"

The admonishment took the form of a discourse against swearing.

The general took to walking on moonlight nights, unaccompanied; and the miner, wondering at these peregrina-

nations, shadowed him only to observe that he strolled tentatively past the O'Shaughnessy cabin a few times, in the manner of a love-sick swain, and then, satisfied that all was well, returned nonchalantly to his home and accustomed seat before the big fireplace, which now roared its cheer in the crisp nights of fall. But the general never told of his adventures and rarely talked of himself.

It remained for the days of early winter to bring about the general's most important move and display his promptness of action. It was when the Widow O'Shaughnessy, seized by sudden heart-failure, fell to the floor between her tubs, abandoning them forever in the great and last relinquishment. It was Jean to whom the frightened babes appealed, and for once he dropped his pail and ran as fast as his little brown legs would carry him to the tiny cabin; and then, awed and stilled, and with startled eyes, returned to Big Andy.

The miner in turn hurried to the cabin, followed by others, and the camp women laid out for burial the first woman to occupy the cemetery at the foot of the shielding pines. The camp women also gave housing to the weeping and wondering little girls and, on the following day, kept them away from the trying scene when the widow was gently yielded to the fragrant earth which enfolded her in its breast after all her years of work and worry and weariness. The general stood beside the grave, calm and unemotional, watching with his unfathomable eyes the funeral whose significance he fully grasped.

With the others he returned to work, but in an unusual mood of listlessness, and finally, as the day waned, disappeared. The night came and the sluices stopped. The lights glowed from the cabin windows, and all the dance-hall music began its callous whining. The moon came peering over the tops of the silent, impassive forests which bordered Holcomb, lifted above them until it transmuted the snow planes of the peaks into fields of diamonds which gleamed in splendid solitude, and then an alarm was given by one of the

women. The little girls were lost—had disappeared from the cabin where they had been left alone for a brief time, and could not be found.

Everywhere they searched, even to the new-made mound out beneath the shadowy pines, but without result. The camp was in a turmoil of anxiety. Andy Kendall, returning from a late trip to his sluices, joined in the quest but with no more success than the others, and at last went to his cabin to secure a lantern.

In the doorway of his abode he discovered the general who, calm and imperturbable, was standing with something foreign in his attitude, some unaccustomed pose of independent determination. The miner's quick eye noted the change. It was the first time he had ever seen him with his hands in his pockets and a suggestion of a swagger. He started hurriedly away with the lighted lantern, and then, in quick inspiration closely akin to divination, whirled abruptly at the foot of the steps and faced the boy.

"Jean," he asked in a tone of unusual peremptoriness, "do you know where the little O'Shaughnessy girls are?"

The general paused for a moment before answering, which hesitancy was also marked by his guardian; then, with slow grace, shrugged his shoulders until the right one was elevated almost to his ear and answered very truthfully:

"Yes, monsieur, I have them."

The lantern dropped from Big Andy's hand to extinguishment, while its globe went tinkling away over the rocks in a cascade of slivered glass and he started to say: "Well, I'll be ——" then thought better of it. Right well he knew Jean Guillot Lafayette.

"Would you mind telling me, old man," he said, with kindly condescension, "where they are?"

Again the general considered for an instant, and then gravely beckoned the miner inside. He took the sputtering candle from the rough pine table, tipped to his own bunk, carefully deposited it on the edge, shielded the wavering flame with one tiny hand, and

with the other gently drew back the outer blanket.

Soundly sleeping beneath, with their hair done up in rough little pigtails, clad in their white nighties and clasped in each other's arms, were "thim O'Shaughnessy kids."

Big Andy Kendall took one look and ran out of the cabin and down the trail shouting to all he met: "I've found 'em! I've found 'em! No need to look any farther." And when the searchers clustered around him with many questions he explained that the missing ones were then in his cabin, and that he would "take care of 'em all right through the night."

"No, you don't," he gruffly admonished one or two of the women who started in that direction. "No need of you goin' up there at all. I'm big enough to watch out for a couple of kids without any assistance."

Some of them grumbled for a few minutes and then, habit resuming, turned to the dance-hall, whose hilarious music, swaying lamps and clinking bar soon brought forgetfulness of all else.

The miner tramped slowly up the hill to where the general was still standing quietly on the threshold, went in, closed the door quite softly, hung his white hat on a peg, and replenished the logs in the fireplace before speaking.

"Jean," he said, "you brought them here?"

"Yes, monsieur."

"What are you goin' to do with them?"

"Keep them, monsieur," he responded with the utmost gravity, seating himself on the low stool which had been made for his especial benefit and watching the sparks that went roaring up the blackened vault.

Big Andy waited for a moment and then ventured another question:

"How will you care for them?"

"On ze money I make—my hundaird franc. Eet ees a fortune, *une bonne fortune*." He turned to the big man, peered across the vivid pathway of light from the blazing logs, and then with

great wistfulness continued: "I, Jean Guillot Lafayette, am *sans famille*. I shall adopt a *famille*. I shall work vaire hard for them."

"And leave me, Jean?" Andy spoke very softly and with a curious, faltering note of bitter heart-break in his voice; some tone suggesting grievous disappointment that he who so loved the boy should not be taken into consideration.

He had tried, he said to himself, God knew he had tried to win this love and had wooed it with care; but it had always been elusive and unyielding. Even now, after all these months, he was but second in the exile's affections and the barrier seemed unbreakable. He bent suddenly forward and leaned his forehead upon his hand, shielding his eyes from the dancing glare of the flames.

For the first time since they had met each other the boy crept over to him unasked, forced himself on the waiting knee and clasped his arms around the weather-beaten neck.

"Monsieur," he whispered as if afraid to voice his secret aloud, "I want them vaire bad; but I could not you leave even for them; because I luf you vaire much."

Big Andy Kendall hugged him almost fiercely and gulped out: "Well, general, you don't have to leave me. You're my little boy, and if you're hankerin' after 'em you can have the little girls. We'll take care of 'em, me and you, and welcome. But I suppose," he said as an afterthought, following an interval in which they held each other very tightly, "that the whole blamed camp'll say I've started an orphan asylum."

The barrier was demolished now forever, and they found that, after all, they were very dear to each other. And as the general for the first time snuggled into Andy's arms to sleep he turned drowsily over, and in his great happiness whispered:

"Ah, *mon père*, I am no longer *sans famille*. Ees eet not, Monsieur Andah-kendal, what zey call godem good to have a *famille*?"

And Big Andy Kendall, smothering a chuckle and omitting rebuke, agreed.

WE ALL HELP AT THE GUILDHALL



By
James Barr



HE gate stood open, the door stood open. The hour was half-past eleven, the morning glorious and promising a day of the brightest for London. The door stood

open, the gate stood open.

Derwent came to an abrupt pause and cast a searching glance round. Satisfied that no one watched him he gazed into the hall, breaking into a good-natured chuckle as he did so. On the hat-rack hung an overcoat of exquisite build. Derwent stepped quickly, quietly in, took the coat from its peg and threw it over his arm and, in the twinkling of an eye, was on the pavement again. Laughing to himself he made his way to the nearest Underground Railway station and took a first-class ticket to Charing Cross.

When the train entered the station Derwent passed along the carriages till he came to a compartment in which was no passenger. This he entered, and when the train started he proceeded leisurely to examine the pockets of his newly acquired garment. These proved to be empty excepting only the inside one. From this he drew forth a gorgeous thing which, on examination, turned out to be no less a matter than an invitation for that very September evening to a reception to be held at the ancient headquarters of civic life of London, the Guildhall. The Right Honorable the Lord Mayor of London, supported by lesser dignitaries of the Corporation, requested the presence of the representative of the *Daily Gazette*, so announced this gorgeous card. Derwent

took off his silk hat and ran the palm of his hand over hair as black and shiny as the nap of the hat he had removed.

"The Guildhall!" he chuckled. "The ancient, honorable, prehistoric Guildhall! Before to-day members of my excellent guild have had their presence there exacted, but it was the police-court section of the place to which they were bidden. They were presented to the lord mayor, and his worship, or whatever they call him when he is in his robes, led many of them a pretty dance. It is quite time our guild, much more ancient than any in London town whatever may be thought of its morals, had its turn to call the music and let others do the dancing."

Derwent, not yet thirty years old, was a man of magnificent stature and unconquerable good humor, lusty and full of laughter, yet a thief. His forte he knew was burglary pure and simple, but of an ambitious order; all his "jobs" were well planned in carefully selected places, and he saw to it that each insured a suitable reward so that the necessity for frequent burglaries was obviated. He recognized that each stroke of business carried its individual dangers, and that the danger was as great let the reward be little or big. No one understood this better than he, yet he was inflicted with irresistible impulses to do ridiculous things at times. Although he never ceased to laugh at himself, these impulses compelling him to commit trivial robberies frightened him. Nevertheless, he found himself quite unable to refrain when the throes of cupidity seized upon him. Hitherto all his doings had been successful; he was

not so much as a suspect, but he dreaded the little things—and laughed.

Charing Cross reached, Derwent made direct to that region of respectable flats and chambers, Clements Inn. An elevator sped him to the third floor of one of the red-brick buildings, a thin steel key admitted him to his cozy chambers. He tossed the stolen overcoat carelessly upon a table and proceeded to address it.

"Confound you, what am I to do with you now that I have you? You do not stay in these diggings, that's as certain as that flamingoes do not wear boots. Out you go, but how? I can't pitch you out of the window as I would like to do. I can't dispose of you in pawn or at second-hand shop without running ten thousand times the risk I care to run. I can't burn you without attracting the attention of every one possessed of a nose. Now, what am I to do with you? Answer me that, if you please."

One rule of Derwent's to which he made no exception was that nothing illegally come by remained in his rooms for even so long as one night; indeed, seldom did the proceeds of a theft so much as enter his flat.

He was known in the Inn as a young Australian with a competency, small but quite sufficient for one of such an exuberant disposition and well-ordered life. He took pride in entertaining those friends he had made, most of whom occupied chambers in the surrounding buildings of the ancient Inn. Of necessity, therefore, his rooms were furnished with legitimately procured things purchased with the proceeds of illegitimately procured things. As he stood there gazing at the coat an idea flashed across his brain.

"Give it to charity! Charities fatten on inconveniences. Now it is the millionaire's millions; again it is the robber's superfluous overcoats. You go to charity, my bright and beautiful coat, and may you do good!"

He seized a sheet of plain paper, and with his left hand, which penned quite a different character from his right, he wrote:

From one who loves the Poor.

Placing this in a pocket, he did up the coat in brown paper and addressing a label, "Salvation Army Headquarters, Victoria Street, City," made his way through the back streets till he came to Holborn. Here he hailed the first common carrier that passed, and parted with the parcel and a shilling. Strolling back to his flat, he mused:

"That overcoat's account is now open. It is debtor to one shilling in cash and a certain indefinite risk to me, and creditor to one invitation to a lord mayor's reception. At the moment I do not know but that the balance is on the wrong side of the ledger, for a shilling is a shilling, but what a lord mayor's invitation may be is quite uncertain. I'll see how the account tots up later."

Seated once more in his rooms, his thoughts occupied themselves with the prospects of the night.

"What does the name of the Guildhall bring to my mind? First and foremost visions of City cheer, visions of City excess, visions of affluence, not without a tinge of vulgar flaunting but real affluence nevertheless, an excess of display yet the display genuine. Over the aristocratic West End of London there broods a foglike suspicion of paste; in the plebeian, commercial City of London diamonds are diamonds. May the gods ever bless the genuine and vulgar in preference to the spurious and refined, say I. There will be jewels at the Guildhall on fat wives of fat merchants." He rubbed his hands together and chuckled.

When the time came for him to take cab to the Guildhall he stood forth dressed in irreproachable style. His instructions to his tailor had been "Make 'em fit like a convolvulus in estivation," and the tailor, who knew not botany, answered: "I'll see to that, sir," and proceeded to see to it. No coarse term of hard labor had scaled Derwent's hands: his cheeks were ruddy from much good living and good nature, and his expression frank yet humorous.

Arriving at the Guildhall he gave up the stolen invitation to an attendant, left his overcoat and hat in the cloak-room, and entered a large reception-room.

A queue of people, aglow with the glory of their distinction, shuffled and sagged toward a dais whereon was the Lord of London, a delightfully dignified elderly gentleman, in all his ephemeral splendor. Derwent saw that presentation was optional, and he elected to forego the honor. He stood among a crowd of onlookers, his hands shoved deep in his pockets, and he chuckled: "This is better than a pantomime, for here the fairy godmothers are real, although the majority of them seem to weigh two hundred pounds."

Derwent ran his eye along the queue. Such well-fed people! So self-satisfied, so complacent, so healthy, so well-groomed! "This is indeed the City," he said to himself, "the City rich in flesh-pots." Gems sparkled and scintillated; the queue glistened like a terrestrial Milky Way. The tips of Derwent's fingers tingled until he was forced to dig into the palms of his hands. After some ten minutes of this he turned to explore.

In three large rooms Derwent found gay throngs already hard at dancing to the music of bands. The floors were crowded with the dancers, yet so great was the number of guests that many couples lined the walls or strolled about as he himself was doing. On every one Derwent beamed good-naturedly. In another room he found a concert in progress, and in still other rooms guests sauntered about examining the pictures which the City has had the taste to acquire through many days.

He descended into the crypt, and there came upon a spacious refreshment-bar where even at this early hour men were taking their wine. After a glass of champagne he strolled back to one of the ballrooms, and taking up a favorable position, watched the dancers float past to the tintinnabulation of a triangle. Occasionally a more than usually attractive face or figure witched his glances, but only for a second. His eyes were for the gems. It seemed to him that the music and motion accentuated their brilliancy.

On a sudden Derwent found himself confronted by an elderly gentleman who

wore a gorgeous chain of office about his neck and down his bosom. The newcomer's face glowed with complacent prosperity; one could tell at a glance that the gilded distinction was good in his eyes. Smiling genially, he said:

"I see you are not dancing."

"No, unfortunately," Derwent answered in his pleasantest tones.

"Too bad, too bad. Young man like you! When I was your age! Ah!"

They both laughed.

"I do dance, you know, and I like it, but the fact is I do not know a soul here, so am rather out of it as far as getting partners is concerned."

"We'll soon put that right for you, my boy, we'll soon put that right. We of the Guildhall are used to entertaining strangers from all parts of the world; and to seeing that they get partners as well. May I ask your name?"

"Cunningham," promptly answered Derwent, this being the name he always gave when transacting business that could not be considered altogether above suspicion.

"Cunningham? I know the name. Are you—"

"I am a writer of stories," interrupted the unblushing Derwent, the press invitation which had admitted him unwittingly influencing him in his sudden necessity of choosing a profession.

"An author? Quite a famous calling; quite an honorable calling, I am sure. Why, I see some of 'em have been getting knighted along with the best of our sheriffs, they have, indeed."

"Oh, some of us manage to get into reasonably good company on occasions. I am here, for instance."

"And I am glad you are here." The citizen of London placed his fat hand on the young man's arm. "And I'm glad I'm here, for I think I can put you in the way of finding a partner or two. My daughter—we all help at the Guildhall, you must know—my daughter may be able to give you a turn or two, and perhaps pass you on, if I may use such a term. My name is Constable, not on the force, if you please"—he laughed heartily at a many-times-proved joke—

"John Constable, not unknown in the City. We all help at the Guildhall. We try to make our guests comfortable and happy while they are with us, for we of the Guildhall are a happy family."

In a conspicuous corner of one of the ballrooms sat a group of City dames radiating satisfaction abroad and gorgeously attired. Toward this group genial Mr. Constable made his way, followed by Derwent, delighting in the adventure; and soon the handsome rascal found himself being introduced to spacious Mrs. Constable as "Mr. Cunningham, the well-known author, my dear."

The good lady distinctly remembered reading one of Mr. Cunningham's novels, and of enjoying it so much; but unfortunately, for the moment, the title of the book had slipped her memory. Turning in unison with his host, Derwent found himself face to face with a girl whose beauty fairly took his breath away. She was tall, almost as tall as Derwent himself, so tall, indeed, that it was only her perfect proportions which saved her from appearing ungainly. Health glowed upon her cheeks, her jet-black hair rolled in one brilliant billow from her tall, white forehead; her eyes sparkled with animation, and she stood there with a well-balanced poise which the young man likened to a hockey attitude. A partner in the waltz then being danced bowed himself into oblivion, evidently having reached the limit of his stamina, while the girl was still fresh and eager.

"Mr. Cunningham, my daughter. Lucy, dear, just in time to meet Mr. Cunningham, the famous author."

Derwent was smitten at a glance. He dearly loved the flourishing and buoyant.

"I hope I am not too late for a dance, Miss Constable. I can believe that every gentleman present has sought the honor."

"My program is full," replied the girl in very matter-of-fact tones, but the glance she flashed at Derwent told him that his compliment had not passed unnoticed.

"Let me see your card, Lucy, dear. Let me run my eye over it. I prom-

ised to fix you up, Mr. Cunningham, and fix you up I shall. Who is S. C.?"

"Mr. Collins, father."

"What! Collins? Where is he? I'll talk to him like a Dutch uncle. Off he goes, and I'll stand him a glass of champagne while you two are having his dance. Write your name in this place, Mr. Cunningham. Write it in full, for I know my daughter will be proud to have your autograph. Good of me? Not a bit of it. I'm here to make matters pleasant for strangers. We all help at the Guildhall, you know."

"Mr. Bartle's name is farther down on the program, father," the girl said.

"Bartle? You would like his name taken off, eh? I don't know as I care to place myself under obligations to Mr. Bartle."

"And I'm certain I do not want to dance with him," said the daughter decidedly.

"Oh, very well, Lucy, dear. I'll chance it. Here's another space for your name, Mr. Cunningham. Now I've given you a start. You are young, and will manage to keep going, I have no fear. I'll hope to see you later."

The genial man vanished, no doubt to make matters pleasant for some other stranger. The City of London is the abiding-place of practical hospitality.

The equally genial young man remained. He lost no time in addressing himself to Lucy Constable.

"It occurs to me that this is a little informal," he began apologetically.

"I hope it does not give your sense of propriety too great a shock," she interrupted.

"Mine? Oh, dear, no! There is little danger of shocking me."

"If father and I have not succeeded I should say there is little danger."

"Now, Miss Constable, you are doing your best to twist my meaning. I will not let you. What I wish to say is that this is a new experience to me and a delightful one. I might be taking a part in a fairy-tale. I rush in just in the nick of time to rescue a beauteous lady from a terrible ogre in the shape of Mr. Bartle, not to mention Mr. Collins."

"You would be a success in the

Guildhall set, Mr. Cunningham. We are said to be such a matter-of-fact lot and so susceptible to flattery."

"To be sure you are nothing of the sort. How could any one be matter-of-fact in such surroundings? This grand old hall, these colored lights, the enthralling music, the enchanting jewels, the lovely ladies—it is a scene from Aladdin."

"I think I have heard 'The Forty Thieves' mentioned in connection with the City oftener than Aladdin," said the girl, whose father had no connection with company-promoting. Derwent, however, was not to be put off his theme.

"You cannot be other than imaginative people here, and that you are amiable I have experience. For instance, it must be a great trial to you to make room on your program for the heaven knows who that drops in from the heaven knows where at heaven knows what time, wanting a dance. To satisfy such an one is true amiability."

"It is a habit. I am used to it by this time. As father says: 'We all help at the Guildhall.' Father's delight is to find a stranger who is not dancing. It gives father a chance to pour out hospitality. He pounces upon the poor man, and marches him round the room till they find me. Then the man is compelled to dance whether or no. I must say that some of them do so with all the cheerfulness of a bear on hot plates."

"I do not know how my dancing may compare with a bear's, but I will back myself to beat the bear in cheerfulness on this occasion at least, Miss Constable," laughed Derwent.

Derwent gazed upon the girl in the greatest admiration. Her loveliness, her frankness appealed to him, and a certain subtle sporting spirit was hers, the spirit of the adventurous which has increased so noticeably among the girls of modern England, and which in many cases is so bewitching.

"I hope father succeeds in finding Mr. Bartle in time to tell him what has happened. It is awkward when father fails to find some one whose name he has scored off my program."

"I think between the two of us we can succeed in beating off even Mr. Bartle."

"Oh! I never fight. I always refer the wronged one to father. He manages to fix matters up some way or other. I always think it fortunate for father that the day of the duel is past. But—we all help at the Guildhall."

At this moment a pompous man, well past middle age, and with shining bald head, appeared, and led away the charming Miss Constable. Derwent gazed after them for a few seconds and then made his way to the crypt for a glass of wine.

The time came and Derwent whirled Lucy Constable out upon the polished floor to the pulsations of a waltz. Below in the crypt, while waiting for this moment, he had grown to look upon himself as quite a distinguished guest—a good man among the good. The little matter relating to another fellow's overcoat was for the time forgotten. However, this self-deception did not last long. As he floated the glorious girl round and round the room a diamond darted splinters of brilliant fire into his eyes. The gem lay in the heart of a gold pansy pinned to the shoulder-strap of his partner, and like a drop of purest dew flashed out upon the room. In size it was not at all remarkable, but Derwent, an expert in such matters, saw that it was of purest water and of relatively great value. The very thing to secure! So easily nipped off, so quickly secreted, so comfortably disposed of, so valuable!

As he whirled the girl languidly round and round his dark eye began to flash to the flash of the diamond. The old itch of desire for possession came upon him until his fingers twitched as though attacked by some nervous disorder. The smile on his face broadened as the struggle to restrain himself increased.

"Not yet, not yet," he kept saying to himself. "It is too early to touch the thing. The gem will keep. Leave it, leave it." Yet against the whole strength of his will his hand began stealthily to make its way up toward

those tantalizing scintillations. "You are an idiot to touch the thing so early, but—ah! now you have done it, so you must just make the best of it."

The waltz was done, the gem lay in his waistcoat pocket, and Derwent stood chatting with Lucy Constable. On a sudden he beheld her father making in great haste toward them. The honest man's countenance bore the expression of one eager to tell startling news. For some moments he seemed unable to find tongue, standing in front of them rubbing his hands together and beaming on all he knew.

"Guess who we have here as a guest this evening?" he suddenly demanded.

"'Oo!" gasped Mrs. Constable, in her anxiety to hear the news letting fall the first "h" she had slipped this evening.

"Guess?"

"Royalty?"

"Royalty? Nothing so common. A burglar! A burglar, my dear! That's who."

Mrs. Constable threw up her hands in consternation.

"Whist! Not a word or you may alarm the people and spoil the evening. He walked in as saucy as you please, and is among us at this present blessed minute with his eyes, if not his hands, on all the finery in the room. That's pleasant for the Guildhall, that is!"

Mrs. Constable now placed her hands to her heart, and commenced to sway forward and back in her emotion.

"A real burglar," continued Mr. Constable. "It seems he walked into a house in Bedford Park and helped himself to an overcoat belonging to a journalist. Would you believe it, he has had the impertinence to use the invitation to this blessed dance which he found in the pocket! The rightful owner, although never dreaming that the thief would have the hardihood to turn up here, mentioned the matter, the invitations taken at the door were examined, and there, large as life, was the identical ticket."

"A thief!" gasped Mrs. Constable.

"A thief all right enough, my dear. But we'll have 'im. He'll be presented

to the lord mayor in a way he won't relish, you take my word."

Characteristically Derwent could not bring himself at once to realize the seriousness of the situation. He found himself laughing at the many expressions of consternation on the faces which surrounded him.

"This is a most interesting situation," he said to his host.

"We'll make it more interesting still when we catch the gentleman."

"I have no doubt you will. What plans have you made to catch him?"

"Well, it just shows you! Truth is stranger than fiction, even though I say so to an author. The stolen invitation belonged to a man on the *Daily Gazette*, and, as luck would have it, the man who took up the invitations at the door happened to be a reader of the *Gazette*. Noticing the name of his particular newspaper on the invitation, he had a good, square look at the bearer, and now says he would know him among a thousand. We've set him to watch at the cloak-room door. When the thief calls for his coat he'll hear of something to his disadvantage, you take my word."

"Yes, that arrangement would seem to meet the case fairly effectively——"

"Lucy, Lucy, where's your brooch?" suddenly barked Mrs. Constable.

Instantly glance and hand of the girl flew to the spot whereon should have reposed that precious diamond. It was gone.

"Run, John, run and tell the police!" cried the distressed matron. "Don't stand there staring like a fascinated hippopotamus. The villain is at work among us. Oh, Lucy, Lucy! You should have taken greater care."

Lucy Constable said not one word. While her mother put handkerchief to eyes and her father ambled off at a puffing pace to warn the police, the girl stood motionless, and continued to stand looking straight in front of her. Then slowly she turned her head and focused her glance upon the face of the young man who stood by her side. In the twinkling of an eye Derwent recognized that the girl guessed all.

The two gazed on one another for some seconds before Derwent's brain told him what to say.

"I am sorry for your loss. You remember as we waltzed catching in those curtains? It may be that the brooch was torn from you there. Let us go and see while your father is reporting the loss."

Giving her no time to reply, Derwent turned and bowed her toward the far end of the room. Without a word the girl accompanied him. Right well she knew that the curtain had interfered with her in no way. Her head, which she held high, made plain to her who had interfered, yet her heart refused to impeach one who had danced so well, and who had behaved so pleasantly, and, more than all, one whose acquaintance she had made in so informal a manner.

Derwent glanced more than once at the girl's face as they walked side by side. These glances reassured him, at the same time telling him plainly the danger of attempting any policy of quibble with Lucy Constable. He knew she knew where the brooch had gone.

"We shall find the brooch," he said.

"I think we will," she answered, without looking in his direction.

"May I pin it where it should not have been taken from?"

"I will do that myself."

He handed her the jewel and she replaced it on the shoulder-strap.

"You do not think that I intended to keep it?"

"What else should I think?"

"It was not my intention to keep it. I wished to make temporary use of it. I hoped to use it to renew the acquaintance we have made this evening."

The girl shook her head.

"I recognize that the chances of a further acquaintance are now ruined. Nevertheless, mine was a pretty plan, and should not have miscarried. I will tell you the plan I formed and you may judge. I was to find your brooch caught in my clothes to-night when I got home. I was to remember having seen you wearing it. I was then to ascertain your address, and at a conve-

nient hour to-morrow evening I was to call at your house to personally return the brooch to you. You were to be delighted at recovering your treasure and, to be sure, I was to be welcome. Alas! the 'was's' have not come to pass. The scheme would have enabled me to renew a most delightful acquaintance. That is why I took the brooch. It was a feasible scheme."

"More feasible than honest."

"I venture to say that others have resorted to darker strategy to gain the friendship of such a girl as you, Miss Constable."

Lucy Constable's cheeks reddened just a little, and she found herself as it were, in spite of herself, strangely drawn in sympathy toward her companion who spoke in so sincere tones to her and laid even his doubtful deeds bare. Half in fear and half in hope she asked:

"The overcoat?"

"I have sent the overcoat to its proper address. I took it from its peg for the adventure of the thing."

"I find that hard to believe."

"Do not trouble to believe; just take it as true."

He dropped his voice.

"I have a favor to ask you."

"I know the favor. You do not need to ask it. I will say simply that I have found the brooch and will cast no suspicion on you."

"I had never any fear that you would. The favor I ask is of quite another sort. You have told me that you all help at the Guildhall. I am in need of help. Please sit down here."

Against her will she seated herself.

"What is it you would ask?"

"How am I to get away from this Guildhall?"

"Get away?"

"Yes, get away. You know this place better than I can ever hope to know it. How am I to get away from here without being detained as a thief. Since hearing the position of affairs from your father I have turned the situation over in my mind a thousand times without hitting upon a plan to get clear of this place."

Over his face the smile still flickered, but his black eyes seemed to flare fire. His soul was in fear, his brain in a fever. He looked to the girl for safety.

"How am I to get away?" he demanded.

"The danger is the cloak-room," she said.

"Yes. I cannot go without my coat and hat."

"Why not send an attendant for them?"

Derwent shook his head.

"Certain detection," he said. "The appearance of an attendant with a guest's check would excite suspicion instantly. Some other plan, please?"

"If you are questioned can you not tell them what you have told me? They know only of the overcoat."

"They have set their minds on catching a thief, and some one must be caught to satisfy them. I would sacrifice my coat rather than be put to the inconvenience and delay, the danger of investigation. It is not the guilty alone who are found guilty, you know."

In sudden enthusiasm the girl spoke.

"I have it! I think I have it! You can act?"

"I have never tried."

"You can assume a part, of that I am convinced. You must now do so—a none too pleasant part. You must pretend to have taken too much wine. That will rescue you from your predicament?"

"What do you mean?"

"It is like this. I have heard father tell that occasionally a guest here takes too much wine and begins to be noisy. When this happens, the attendants slip him out by a private door, as, of course, it would never do to conduct a tipsy man through the dance-rooms. They get his coat for him and send him off in a cab."

Derwent was upon his feet like a flash.

"That's the information I needed. Indeed you do all help at the Guildhall. I see my way clear. How can I thank you, Miss Constable?"

Lucy Constable, too, started to her feet, but more as if in fright at what

she had done and the part she had played in the evening's business. Yet on her face was a flush which certainly looked much like a flush of triumph. Looking Derwent unflinchingly in the eye, she said:

"We all help at the Guildhall, but—usually not quite so much as I have to-night!"

He held out his hand, but she did not take it. Withdrawing her gaze, she turned and walked slowly away. His eyes followed her majestic exit from his life.

On his way to the refreshment-room Derwent slipped his cloak-room check behind the fronds of a giant fern. In rather loud tones he called for a glass of champagne. A moment after receiving it the glass slipped from his fingers and shivered to splinters on the floor. The well-behaved people who surrounded him were struck aghast at seeing a young man the worse for liquor under the hospitable roof of the Corporation of London. Turning, Derwent half-tripped over a lady's train. Instantly an attendant stood by his side.

"Another glass of champagne," demanded Derwent in a thick voice.

"Yes, sir. This way, sir."

The waiter took his arm to pilot him behind the refreshment-counter.

"The champagne is being served behind 'ere, sir."

Derwent allowed himself to be conducted "behind the scenes," passing through a narrow door and landing in a chair in a private room. Three attendants stood by him. Rubbing his forehead vigorously, as though trying to awaken himself, he said:

"I want to get to my hotel. I wish you would call a cab. I feel deadly sleepy."

"Where is your cloak-room check?" asked the man.

Derwent languidly dipped fingers into his pockets one after another but without result.

"Seem to have lost it," he muttered.

"Never mind. One of you let me have a cap and coat until to-morrow. Anything will do so long as you get me into

a cab. I'll send for my things in the morning. I must go to bed at once. Here's a couple of sovereigns for your trouble and the loan of the coat."

"May we feel in your pockets for the check, sir?"

"Certainly. Drive ahead, but I am afraid I have dropped it."

No check was found, and after a short consultation a cap was clapped on Derwent's head, an overcoat, much the worse for wear, slipped on him, and without more ado he was assisted into a cab, which seemed to be in waiting for such a case as his.

"Great Central Hotel," he muttered, giving the name of an hotel far from the quarter of the town where his flat awaited him, and off drove the cab.

Having got within half a mile of the hotel, Derwent stopped the cab.

"The air has done me good," he said to cabbie as he stepped upon the curb, "and a walk from here to the hotel will put the finishing touches to me. Here's five shillings for you, and good night."

Cabbie said "Thankee," and crawled off, satisfied for once in his life. By way of unobtrusive streets Derwent doubled back to Clements Inn. He did not take the elevator, fearing that his

shabby coat and cap would be noticed; but quickly, quietly mounting the stairs, entered his chambers. Flinging off coat and cap he stood, a great grin overspreading his countenance.

"That overcoat's account is now closed," he said. "It would not look good in the eyes of an accountant: Debtor to one shilling to the carrier who took the stolen coat to the Salvation Army; two pounds to the waiters for these confounded clothes that they lent me; five shillings to the cabbie, and the loss of one handsome overcoat and one opera-hat left at the Guildhall. It will cost me at least another shilling to get rid of this shiny coat and frowsy cap. Creditor—what? Nothing? No, not nothing by any means. She was a glorious girl to have passed even so short a space of time as an hour with. Hang me if I would not run as great risk again, aye, willingly, for another hour of her company."

He ran his fingers through his black hair.

"Lucy Constable is a glorious sight. I can compare her only to the view of the sky from the surface of Saturn—when all his rings and moons shine forth in a blaze of fire."



A FALLING STAR

"A wish wished while a star falls will come true."—OLD SAYING.

WHAT time the night lay sparkling o'er the world's dark line,
Nor waking wild bird called from out the wood,
Upon the highest hill I wistful stood
And cried unto the stars above the tallest pine:

"Give my Love happiness!"

What sleepless angel, wise
And pitiful, beheld a heart's desire,
Broke heaven's laws to loose an answering fire,
That swift, a trembling star slipped downward from the skies?

MARTHA GILBERT DICKINSON BIANCHI.

The Romantic Mr. Wallenhoff

by
Beatrix Demarest Lloyd.



GOOD morning. Curse you!" said John Delafield, with a nod. Luckily he was not within ear-shot of the gentleman to whom he extended such greetings, but the nods had been exchanged from far sides of a fat old hedge, superlatively well cut. The reason for the hostile salutation was not apparent. Delafield had indeed been waiting an hour for it to appear. But it never got up very early, and the hour was barely ten now. "It" was Olivia Wheaton.

Being safely out of hearing, Mr. Delafield elaborated his appraisal and condemnation of the gentleman walking so placidly about in the adjoining garden. "Confound your good looks and your fortune and your romantic ways! I wish you had never been born. Dropped the title of count, did you, and got yourself naturalized, did you? I wish you were in Thuringia or Croatia or any old place far enough away." He pretended to be looking at the border of elaborately arranged foliage-plants that adorned the demarcation of the hedge, but with bent head he was in reality taking in every detail of the appearance of his rival. "Where did you get your damned airs of authority? Confound it, you frown about like Napoleon. Where does all your cursed money come from? Who is your tailor that can make your coat hang like a sartorial dream? Where did you get your mysterious look of sadness? And why the devil did you come to live next door to my Olivia?"

"Good morning, sir." Apparently the voice of the hollyhock that caught him full on the shoulder. But Delafield would have known the voice had it issued from the bronze lips of a giant Buddha. He turned almost gladly.

But even as he faced her, radiant in an energetic morning mood, his look darkened with a sudden suspicion. Almost he glanced over the hedge to see if the other man were still in sight. "Did you come out for a glimpse of your romantic neighbor or to see an old friend, Olivia?"

"I am far too young to have an old friend," she answered, with a dazzling good humor unimpaired. "And just why do you call Mr. Wallenhoff romantic?" She turned and looked in the direction of this individual as she said it, as if perhaps the justification of the description could be seen at that distance. "Is there anything too romantic in coming out of one's house in the nice new day, and taking a sniff at the nice new flowers?"

"Before one goes to town in a nice new motor-car? Perhaps not. Plague take him!"

"I wonder," Miss Wheaton deliberately said, "why you seem so prejudiced against a homeless stranger."

"I'll tell you—but first I am going to tell your father. I'm stiff and old-fashioned and unromantic"—he brought down an emphasis on the word like the bang of an argumentative fist on a table—"and I prefer to have your father's permission to propose to you before you have so much as an inkling that I intend to do it."

She looked up at him and laughed.

"And are you going to leave me out here near this inflammable hedge, and this possibly contagious romanticism?" Her eyes regarded him fleetingly, and then considered the extremely well-tailored shoulders of Mr. Wallenhoff. "Do you know, I do so wonder about him. He looks important—as if he must be somebody very especial. Yet if nobody knows anything about him! Perhaps he is some great nobleman forced by political pressure to exile himself. He is tremendously rich—so it can't be that he has come to find an heiress. Then, too, he never seeks any acquaintances—not even mine."

The lapels of Mr. Wallenhoff's coat and extremely white waistcoat were under her scrutiny now as he turned around in the far end of the garden and came slowly back toward them.

"How perfectly he wears his clothes." She sighed. "Yes, I suppose he is a romantic figure, John." This, with an air of granting a great favor in agreeing with him on this point. "At any rate, I spend most of my time thinking about him, and his encouragement is so subtle as to be invisible. How well he must know the world. He must, with all his wealth, have traveled ever so much. And a rolling stone may not gather moss but it may achieve a charming polish—which, after all, I would much rather have than nasty, dusty, licheny moss all over me, wouldn't you? What puzzles me is—why should he have bought that place and settled down on it? I wonder what his business is in Manhattan, don't you?"

She waited for an answer, but John Delafield, unwilling to endure her torture, though he knew its harmlessness, had left her somewhere about the middle of her ruminative speculation concerning his rival and had gone toward the house. She was pleased to be amused by his dudgeon, and even called him by name softly once or twice as she slowly followed his direction; but Delafield made no answering sign.

It was nearly eleven now, and the nice new motor-car was to be heard coughing a repeated cough of admonition to its master that while automo-

biles can on occasion be made to wait, Father Time still trusts to invariable shanks' mare. From the end of her eye, Miss Wheaton could see Mr. Wallenhoff giving ear unto the summons, and turning his steps toward the servant who had brought out to him his dust-coat.

"It must be nice to be very rich," sighed Olivia. "I will tell father that I would like it for Christmas."

Mr. Wheaton looked up from the littered desk of an idle man as John Delafield entered his library. "Good morning, John. You find me as busy as usual. Upon my soul!"—his attention went back to the bill lying open before him—"I believe my auto is a greater piece of extravagance than my own daughter." He rubbed the back of his gray head with a sympathetic touch, as if he wanted to tell himself how very sorry he was for himself. "Five hundred for tires in a month and a half, eh?"

"That is bad," said John meditatively. "I haven't bought a single tire this month."

"Didn't know you have a car."

"I haven't."

The elder man laughed shortly. "So much the wiser, John. Nor a daughter, either."

John Delafield sat down in the chair at the side of the table, and looked approvingly out the window at the view of the wooded Hudson walls. "Very true, sir. I have felt the lack of it. Could you let me have yours?"

"Certainly—I'll call the stables." Mr. Wheaton put out his hand toward his telephone, but instead encountered the detaining hand of John. "You misunderstood me, sir. It's the daughter that I want."

"God bless me!" exclaimed Mr. Wheaton, sinking back into his chair.

John nodded. "I hope He will, of course. But not to the exclusion of everybody else, Mr. Wheaton. You have enjoyed His concentrated blessing in the shape of Olivia for nearly twenty years. Don't you think it's my turn now?"

"Upon my soul, John!" Mr. Wheaton

condoled again feelingly with the back of his gray head. "Upon my soul!"

Delafield, who had intended to make his appeal in a vastly different way when he entered but being constitutionally unable to let an advantage slip by profitless, scanned the bewildered face sharply. It was all very well for him to be bewildered, but when a settled expression should take form in the midst of chaos, would it be satisfactory or not?

"I'll tell you what it is, Mr. Wheaton," he went on, having a vague idea that he might mold the expression somewhat in its incipience, "I would not have taken you by surprise like this had I been able to break it to you gently. As a matter of fact, it was not my intention to ask your permission to marry Olivia, or hers either, for some time yet. And I would have let things go on just as they were had not circumstances over which I have undoubtedly no control made it imperative that I take some action."

Mr. Wheaton looked at him half-comprehendingly.

"I mean this Wallenhoff," explained the young man. "I should be a fool not to see what is going on under my nose. He is desperately in love with Olivia, that's as plain as a scare-headline."

"Is it?" demurred Mr. Wheaton, half smiling.

"Any man would be. There you are! Frowls around his garden looking unutterable things at every object in sight except her." Delafield crossed his knee with a vicious swing.

"But that seems hardly dangerous enough——"

"Don't you believe it, sir. I'll stake my blue-label dog against your broken walking-stick that Olivia knows the man adores her."

Mr. Wheaton smiled, wholly at his ease. "I was afraid I was going to have to lay you out for suggesting that Olivia could be guilty of a flirtatious interest in a man she never met. But if it's no worse than that he lives next door and walks in his own garden studiously avoiding an encounter of the eyes, I think we are tolerably secure.

Besides, John, what is there against the man?"

"Against the man! Agai—— Well, now, Mr. Wheaton! Why the man's good-looking, damned good-looking and sickeningly rich!"

"Oh, I see. From your point of view, naturally you object to his being—— ahem!——good-looking and rich."

"I can't be expected to see it from his point of view. Then, they say he is really a count, but he doesn't care to use his title. I call it sinful romanticism."

"But surely a level-headed girl like Olivia——"

"Oh, I know——plain American gentleman for the American girl. But the heart of a girl, Mr. Wheaton, is neither American nor Hindu—it's just all-the-same girl. And romance goes very strong on that track. And on the top of all that doesn't he pile a lot of interesting mystery? Who is he? Where did he come from? Where does that nice new automobile take him every morning? What business has a rich good-looking Prussian count to be taking him to Manhattan every day?"

"Why suspect the man of running a gambling-den, my dear fellow, just because he goes to the city every day? Of course there are very few honest practises still in continuance in New York. I grant you that. But do give the poor soul the benefit of any slight doubt that exists. I have no reason to inquire into his affairs. Naturally, if he came to me with any such proposition as—as the one you have made to-day, I should make such inquiries. But in the meantime——"

"In the meantime," exploded Delafield gloomily, "she is falling in love with him."

Mr. Wheaton was still smiling. "Oh, I am sure your anxiety is leading you to exaggerate. Indeed, John, I have never had any doubt of the validity of your title to that young woman's affection. You staked the claim a long, long while ago."

John Delafield got up and moved about impatiently. "I used to hope," he said, "she did care a little for me. But

since this princeling has come to occupy the next house and walk around the grounds in the morning, with nothing between him and a silly romantic girl but a boxwood hedge, I've begun to worry myself to death. Then, he's making such a paradise of the place—no woman could look at it and not dream of possessing it, of trailing long muslin gowns over the smooth lawns, or standing near the balustrade with a basket of roses and a Borzoi hound. I tell you, sir, he may not have said one single word to her, but he has more silent arguments on his side than I shall ever have of eloquence on mine."

Mr. Wheaton clapped him genially on the shoulder. "Never give up the ship—or a girl. John, what is it you want me to do?"

"Give me your consent, sir, to ask her to marry me. You know all my affairs. I can't compete with this Sardanapalus here next door in the matter of magnificence, but the prospects are not so bad. You know I love her—you can't be obtuse enough not to understand why I have been playing sheriff on the premises all these years. I've loved her ever since I've known her—which really is romantic, though she won't see it so, I dare say. You know my people, and you know me. And there's all there is."

"I know, John, certainly I know. It's come a little suddenly, perhaps. But I begged for her mother when she was only eighteen, and I am not so old but that I can remember that we were going to run away if her folks said 'No.'" He held out his hand to that of John Delafield. "There you are, John. Now, run along and ask her."

"Not much. That's not the way," retorted the knowing aspirant for Miss Wheaton's affections. "In the first place I shall get her away from the environment of these hanging gardens of Babylon next door. I shall take her to town for luncheon, and blind her better judgment with a large bunch of violets. Oh, I'm an old file, I assure you; never had a girl refuse me yet."

The older man laughed. "By all means follow out your tested program,

John. If you think a motor-car would add an alluring touch to your general formula, take mine and God bless you!"

It so thoroughly did appeal to Delafield's sense of fitness that when he had won Olivia's consent to lunching in town with him, and she had changed her radiant morning whiteness for a light-blue linen costume that made it very hard for John to wait until he had fully carried out his preliminaries, they ensconced themselves in the tonneau of "Father's car," very much as Phaeton might have done had he taken a lady with him on that memorable occasion.

"So you think of Mr. Wallenhoff nearly all the time, do you?" inquired John grimly, folding his arms and glowering at her sidewise.

"Oh, yes, indeed," returned Olivia most artlessly. "I am so interested in him. Haven't you noticed how much he looks like Napoleon? I wonder if he will call his place St. Helena?"

"He would probably dwell upon his triumph, not his exile."

"Dwell upon it? Is that a joke, John?" She turned a smiling look on him.

Underneath the tires that Mr. Wheaton found so costly the Albany post-road was rolling itself up like a carpet. The city of Manhattan was being drawn nearer and nearer, like a child's toy on the end of a string. John Delafield continued to glower at her, but he felt distinctly happy. After all, she couldn't really seriously be interested in the man.

Once in the confines of the island, they drove down at a good pace into the park and down Fifth Avenue. John Delafield's first maneuver was the stopping at a fashionable florist's for a large bunch of violets.

"I'll have her," he said softly, in confidence to the crisp bill he handed the salesman, "if I have to sign an agreement to give her some like these every day."

Then, at a very snail's pace, they went on down the avenue, choked to the very steps of the houses with the flood of carriages and pedestrians. At the extreme Mecca of hotel Mohammedanism

they waited in line to be deposited at the door. When their turn came John helped her out, violets and all, and wished she would jump at him mentally as well as she did physically in that instance.

A small confidential table, a delightfully cool and expensive luncheon ordered—"And I'll contract to give her one of these every day, if she'll only say 'yes'," said John Delafield in confidence to the menu—and the order of the day was well established. John leaned his elbows on the table, and clasped and unclasped his nervous thin hands. His gray honest eyes studied her face, his lips set grimly. By George, he had got to win her!

"Olivia," he said earnestly.

She was looking across the room, full of palms and mirrors and pretty women and dapper men. "Yes?" she acknowledged absently.

"Olivia."

"Yes."

"Olivia, dearest, I want to—"

"Why, there's Mr. Wallenhoff," said Olivia.

John Delafield shut his teeth hard over the word on his tongue. After an instant of uncontrollable fury he turned his head. Mr. Wallenhoff had just come in at the door, and after standing there a moment looking from one side of the room to the other as if in anxious search of some friends, went slowly down the center aisle, still turning his frowning Napoleonic profile from side to side, and still with the unappeased look of anxiety upon his face, went out the farther door and disappeared.

"He must be lunching here," said Olivia, with a sigh.

Delafield swung a clam into the cocktail mixture with a vicious hand. "Yes," he said, in a tone that reminded Olivia of a man kicking at an annoying dog.

"You were saying?" said Olivia.

Delafield ate the clam. "I don't just remember," he said, with angry carelessness.

Suddenly a friendly hand came down firmly on his shoulder. "Hello, Johnny," said a man passing behind him.

Delafield looked up, and his face suddenly smiled. "Why, Ned Peyton! Here, stop!" He flung an inquiring glance and a "Permit me?" at Olivia, who nodded pleasantly. The passer-by halted and came back. Two other young men, who were with him, dawdled gracefully at an unintrusive distance.

John and Ned Peyton shook hands heartily, and the former envied the latter even the pretty dimpling smile he received as an acknowledgment of his introduction. The two stood an instant chatting.

"I didn't even know you were in town," said Delafield. "Why didn't you look me up?"

"Only did get in this morning. Spent an hour finding a decent hotel where we could get in—the town is full of us Westerners." He directed this bit of information at Miss Wheaton with a frank glance of admiration. "Even now we are having trouble to get a table. Otto is trying to get us something somewhere. Awfully glad I ran across you. Come in to see me—I am stopping here. Come in to-morrow and have lunch. Very much honored to have met you, Miss Wheaton."

"George will put a table in for you, Mr. Peyton, by the glass door there if you will wait," said a voice behind him.

Mr. Peyton turned. Mr. Delafield turned. Miss Wheaton turned.

It was Otto Wallenhoff, alert, Napoleonically frowning, always passing on, but undoubtedly the Otto of common parlance, the manager of the Commissariat Caravansera.

"Oh, thanks," said Peyton. He quietly put a five-dollar bill into Otto's hand. The hand seemed hardly to notice it, the head made a bare motion of acknowledgment and Otto Wallenhoff had gone on to stop beside another table.

Ned Peyton had also gone. Delafield dropped into his seat, staring at Olivia. She was in a fine color, but she met his eyes with a gentle look that might almost have been a plea for mercy.

"You were saying?" she repeated meekly.

THE OTHER CHANCE

By Mrs. John Van Vorst



It was a small thing—one of those small things that turn the course of an existence.

Grace Thorndyke thought it over when she reached the Fifth Avenue house. She related to herself the incidents of its revelation—and then she laughed that she could even for an instant have taken it seriously. How absurd, indeed! Her husband, Jack Thorndyke, was the most proverbially "in love" man of any that came within the range of her mental scrutiny. "Thorndyke is daft about Grace"—this was the emphatic manner in which her marital situation was summed up by the initiated. Never, to her recollection, could she remember to have heard the inverse capitulation. When the Thorndyke marriage was referred to it was always Jack and his ardor of which every one spoke. To Grace's sentiments on the subject, no one ever alluded. Did she in fact have any sentiments—for Thorndyke, that is? This was what she had been wondering.

But just then the little thing occurred.

It was a time propitious for high relief in incidents. A moral lassitude, a mental weariness, had crept over Grace Thorndyke. She had reached that absolute calm which women so dread in their lives. Not the still spot in the whirlpool that is simply a flash of repose between the forces of encircling eddies—no—this was the calm, the dead calm, the flat, windless still, the lifeless immobility upon whose surface the "lit-

tle thing" is bound to make, not actually a commotion since the very air about is dead, but a ripple, a succession of little shivers that run outward from the point of concussion and lap against the shores that have served hitherto as imprisoning limitations.

Grace Thorndyke thought of it all that early October afternoon in the Fifth Avenue house.

She had come down from the Gene-see Valley the day before. A certain disgust for her husband's—Jack Thorndyke's—all-absorbing passion for hunting had impelled her to manifest some activity in her own behalf. She hated hunting, and could not be induced even to look on at Jack's exploits in the field.

He could hunt to his heart's content. She could go to town, have a glance over the house, order more winter clothes, add to the supply of autumn hats. Whatever she liked, she could do. This was part of the dead calm, the worst of it indeed; no opposition, no resistance. She thought how weary the Chinese idols must grow of seeing forever the worshipping multitude kneel before them in adoration.

Jack adored her. And she had cared for him desperately—or thought she had—when they were married. There was a certain glow still about her recollections of the honeymoon. Not the steady, fixed beacon-light of ecstasy that illumined the onward way of a few old-fashioned people she had met, but a fitful, firefly flash which now and then, just for the sake of Auld Lang Syne, made her go over to her husband when he was half-dozing in his chair after a good run to

the hounds and shake him into easy delight by putting her arms around his neck and telling him she loved him still. Then Jack was half wild with joy; and his very joy irritated her—so the scene of spontaneous tenderness seldom repeated itself in the Thorndyke ménage.

Jack, moreover, was timid. He fancied the surest manner of pleasing was not to protest demonstration but to be a perpetual consent to every passing whim his wife might fancy. And if—under this worshipful régime, too easy by half—the pretty Grace Thorndyke chafed, her husband perceived nothing of the real cause. The too easy victories appeared to him only as insufficient hostage for a devotion that longed to bind itself eternally.

Yet Jack Thorndyke was not truly happy; how could he be?

For that was not the "little thing," either. The little thing was only a passing incident.

The curtains were half drawn in Mrs. Thorndyke's boudoir in the Fifth Avenue house. She seated herself at her Louis XIV desk, a priceless bit of buhl, which Jack had given her, meaning to write. But when she had lifted the pen her eyes fell, like vagabonds, to wandering. They followed the strange, unwonted outlines of the candelabra done up in their covers of linen for the summer; they swept down along the perfect curves of the mantelpiece, a chef-d'œuvre of seventeenth century French art which her husband had secured for her at a fabulous price. Even disguised thus in their wrappings, the furnishings of this boudoir spoke for Jack in their perfect form and grace, as an expression of his ardent will to please.

"Poor old Jack," Grace murmured, "he really does adore me."

And yet stronger than this conviction, stronger than the accumulated ennui which it suggestively implied, there was the "little thing."

And the little thing was this. Ah, the psychology of the feminine soul, how subtle, how elusive!

Stuart Ewing was coming up for over Sunday to the Thorndykes' farm in the

Genesee Valley. Ewing was, in fact, to take the train with Grace that very night. She would see a lot of him as had chanced more than once, for he hated the field as much as she, though for reasons very different. Ewing had been thrown from his horse a year or so before. He had struck in some strange manner, or been trampled on. His heel, like Achilles', the vulnerable point, had been demolished in a horrid fashion. Ewing trod around with a cane after that. The women were sorry for him. He had a lot of pity and he was becoming the sort of "indoor" man of leisure who "has time," that primary power which most men ignore to be their chiefest rival.

It was in a state of mind not quite defined by the pretty Mrs. Thorndyke that Ewing was coming to Fairfarm for a day or two, and she was to travel up with him from New York to Mount Morris in the train and thence by carriage to the house.

This man, whose melancholy, dolent charm appealed irresistibly to her, Grace could easily perceive, still viewed the world—despite his accident—as a hunting-field. He was with the troupe of the restless—not as of old, pursuing an actual prey to its own death, but following along one scent or another in the trail of distraction.

That Stuart Ewing cared for her, Grace Thorndyke did not even inwardly deny; but he had never told her he loved her. This was part—the greater part—of his attraction for her. He was not a man of whom she could make a friend—this she felt decisively—the stanch sort of man friend with whom, as it were, she might lay down arms.

Ewing's claim upon her was on lines different altogether. She knew he cared for her and until he had told her so, she was pleased to exert over him, fostered by the atmosphere of flattering confidence, her sure fascination.

In an idle longing to exercise the powers of that "other self" which Ewing had provoked in her, Mrs. Thorndyke was led, as though by chance, into the rash discovery of the "little thing." A desire, along with others to-

ward the same end, to appear before Ewing as the "wife adored," got hold of Grace and suggested the means for it—a bunch of violets, a few gardenias, worn ruthlessly in her coat would make her look, she fancied, more than ever like the wife adored. Indeed, she even reflected that Jack, were he not so absorbed in his horses, might have sent her these very flowers for which she planned to stop on her way up-town.

The train was to leave West Twenty-third Street at eight forty-five P. M. It was only five o'clock when Grace entered the flower store. As she strolled about the shop, heeding little the florist's recommendation, her eyes fell upon a spray of orchids, rare, perfect, beautiful, with the exotic brilliance that seemed to claim their payment in diamonds rather than in gold.

"Give me those; will you, please?" she said to the man.

He was all smiles, all protestations of excuse.

"I beg your pardon, madam, they are reserved by a special gentleman for a special lady."

"Ah!"

Impelled by feminine curiosity, Grace moved along the counter. Her eyes fell on the card that lay among the purple velvet of the orchids' sensuous surfaces. She smiled. The card was Jack Thorn-dyke's. He had not then forgotten her? Yet a second glance, only a glance, but so indelible, and the smile faded from her lips. The flowers were from her husband, but they were not going to her. They were for another woman.

The morning air was crisp and cold as Grace Thorn-dyke stepped onto the Mount Morris platform. She drew her furs up more closely about her throat with a sense of luxurious comfort; and only her eyes, smiling under their fine level brows, greeted Stuart Ewing as he joined her.

The carriage was waiting and, with the slight delay it takes to despatch bags and valises in their proper directions, the hostess of Fairfarms and her guest started along the road that passes over the Genesee River, gliding along

between shores with green and rounded outlines under the ugly little wood and wire bridge.

Then the horses sprang into a short trot. Grace brought her eyes back from the splendid sweep of undulating hill and valley, soft and mellow with the October haze enveloping the warm autumnal foliage as though the fairly flaming leaves were trailing forth from veritable fire, a wreath of smoke. Grace looked at Ewing and laughed. There was something fresh and *provoquante* in this little laugh.

"Are you so glad as all that to be at home?" Ewing asked her, a shade of irritation in his tone.

Grace shrugged her shoulders. "Only when I've been away." And she hid her face momentarily in the furs that encircled her throat before she finished; "Not quite so glad when I stay here right along."

"You like change?"

"Anything for a change? No, not as bad as that!"

"No one could know you, though," Ewing went on, in the somewhat tense manner of a man who is trying, for the purely personal reason, to make a woman out, "without seeing that you're restless, not long satisfied in one place." He stopped. The word "unhappy" was on the tip of his tongue, but he did not quite dare to utter it, and Grace, as though it had been a reproach, seemed even to resent his last remark.

"You can't call me so horribly restless," she said. "I spend two mortal months every year in this blessed valley with my husband, and you will admit it's not the most thrilling place in the world when you don't know and don't care a thing about horses."

"Is Jack so daft as all that about it?"

"He's got only two hobbies—haven't you found that out?—hunting, and me, his wife. I suppose I might even put myself first." She laughed again.

They had turned in at the gate of the farm and were rolling along under the shadow of an elm-bordered avenue. At the house steps the butler stood waiting to assist them. Jack Thorn-dyke was not there.

"Mr. Thorndyke left the house at half-past six, 'm." The butler made this announcement solemnly. "The meet was at seven, 'm, at the Big Tree Inn, 'm. Mr. Thorndyke left word he'd be back about noon, 'm."

When they had reached the big hall and stood before the hearth, Grace turned to Ewing.

"I wasn't so far wide of the mark, was I?" she said. "Except that I might almost have left the other hobby its right of precedence?"

It was toward eleven o'clock that Ewing joined Grace Thorndyke in the library where she sat before the huge log-fire sewing, or pretending to sew, on a bit of tapestry. The sweeping lines of her graceful figure, the charming contour of her face bowed over the needlework, the crown of dark hair whose rebellious masses were gathered into submission because of the natural wave that rippled over them, made her a most adorable picture. Ewing was deucedly glad that Thorndyke would not be back for an hour.

This lovely woman had such a multitude of perfections in her make-up that her charm was assiduous. Her ear was tiny and well-placed, almost on a level with her eyes which were gray and large and full of "soul," while her mouth, with its short upper lip and crimson surfaces, seemed to pout and to provoke, to caress and to be cruel, to please and to tantalize, as though she had no soul at all.

Ewing could think of nothing in the world he wanted so much as to be with her. He was sure to win her, with patience, he argued to himself. The indoor man, the man of leisure, the man who has time to read, who can follow the vagaries of the feminine mind—how could he fail to win out in the long run, pitted against a husband who only lifted himself out of the saddle into the tub, and thence to his chair at the dining-table; a series of mechanical impulses that concerned only his own physical welfare and enjoyment? Jack Thorndyke rode well, and ate well, and probably slept well. What chance had he, the "ever absent"—since when not

hunting he was dozing—what chance had he against the subtle, insinuating, comprehensive Ewing whose perception and sensibilities were acute and exercised in the understanding of woman? Thus Ewing argued to himself as he talked with Grace.

He unfolded the roll of silks that lay on her lap, and began, as he conversed, to untangle the long, multi-colored skeins. His very manner of touching these bits of stuff with which she worked seemed, through the silken threads he handled, to send a magnetic current. Grace became less flippant, she was a trifle constrained. Ewing's manner seemed so horribly serious; her feelings were confused.

She reflected. At first with a certain wilful desire to consider herself wholly free. Had not Jack, her husband, been sending, unbeknown to her, flowers to another woman? This recollection made her a bit defiant, not indifferent to adventure. Then, as conflicting testimony, came the thought of Jack's devotion, his almost helpless, desperate manner of loving her, the sort of adoration that created in itself an atmosphere of security which half stifled her, and made her eager to try other strata wherein to breathe. Somewhat with the exasperation of the captive, freedom tempted her, if only to see "what would happen."

This occasional glance which she cast sidelong into the precipice that Stuart Ewing was endeavoring to show her, he mistook for encouragement. He talked more eagerly. He leaned over her as she worked. He begged her to put down the tapestry, and look at him. When she resisted, he took the roll of canvas in his hands and tossed it away, gazing intently at her, scarcely breathing lest the perfect image before him fade, withdraw beyond his reach.

And gently, as though partly hypnotized, Grace yielded. She let herself be led on from the impersonal discussion of problems in general to the most telling of individual appeals. She gave herself over to the enveloping atmosphere of sentiment. She was stirred and troubled. Ewing's onslaught was

so subtle, so indirect, she could not take offense even though he had drawn so close to her that she felt within his power. There was, in her very mood, an abandon which Ewing had provoked. He was going to tell her now, she knew it, that he loved her. From this thought she could not shake herself aloof. And what would she, what could she, answer him?

But a sudden occurrence broke the dominating spell. It was the butler, who came in, something sinister in his manner.

"There's somebody wants to speak to you at the telephone," he said. "It's rather urgent. It's about Mr. Thorn-dyke, 'm."

Grace got to the door just as it swung open with a heavy sound as of some one heaving a deadly burden. Ah! what a burden! The chill struck at her heart.

Thorn-dyke had been thrown from his horse. He had come down on his head; they did not fear the worst, the doctor was reassuring, but the wounded man lay unconscious still. Pale, ashen-gray, he lay on the improvised stretcher. Even in that moment of terror and ghastly apprehension, fear of the unknown, it was a revelation to Grace that her first impulse was to seize her husband in her arms, to fold him against her breast, to warm him there into the life that seemed slipping from him so fast, so fast!

Late that evening, when Mrs. Thorn-dyke crept down into the library she found Ewing there, seemingly as she had left him; the hunter again, on the alert and knowing where to watch. Grace would come to him, of this he had had no doubt—so short a time before she had been almost in his arms, the warm flush of her cheek had been near, so near, his lips.

"Oh," she cried, "Jack had a terrible fall," putting her hand over her eyes. "He was unconscious at first."

Ewing made no response. He stood by the fire, his back toward the blazing logs. An expression of triumph—the hunter approaching his goal—lighted

his handsome face. Grace could run on as she liked about an unconscious husband; she had come to Ewing; she had not left him there to wait in vain. She was not indifferent.

"You don't seem to realize," she appealed to him, "what I have been through. Jack hasn't spoken really rationally yet."

"I saw the doctor," Ewing got out at last. "He says things will be all right in a day or two."

His tone somewhat implied what was his estimate of Thorn-dyke's accident; a detail. Had he not himself been through a worse ordeal? Did he not bear upon him that mark of wreckage which the hunting-field alone can stamp? And by the very calm, the very placidity of his manner, he caused Grace to stop before him, to pause, sinking listless into an armchair before the fire. Her long *crêpe de chine* gown of exquisite texture seemed but to prolong in softness of substance and beauty of color the pale tremulous atmosphere that hovered about her eyes, her lips, her being.

Stuart Ewing found her adorable. He stood watching her lovely form as it lay against the oaken back of the high chair into which she had dropped, exhausted. The soft lines of her loose dress emphasized the poignant charm of her exquisite figure. The flush upon her cheeks, the slightly drawn contour of her brow, enchanted and allured the too habitual Ewing. There was something of irony in his tone.

"Jack will be in the field in a day or two. He's only had a nasty shake-up. We all know what that is. You mustn't worry yourself sick over it. He'll drop off into a natural sleep and then everything will be all right."

Her eyes bent, Grace played with the cords of her charming gown, tossing them about over her knees as they fell there after encircling her slender waist.

Even in this time of awful strain, she realized that she was tugging ever so slightly at her chains; the spirit of unrest in security kept her wings ever fluttering, beating upon the bars of her golden cage. And then, there was the

other half-uttered call that had brought her now to Ewing.

She had half hoped, had known indeed that he would be waiting for her, would find her appealing in her anxiety, would be allured by the shadowy circles that made her eyes more brilliant above the flash of color in her feverish cheeks.

Ewing stood with his back to the fire, gazing down upon her, filling his soul, prolonging the silence, conscious that she might more easily remain so long as he said nothing. Yet the temptation was too strong. This woman whom he loved was here, alone with him, and by her own choice, under circumstances that added to the poignancy of her presence. Was it not the chance matured for which he had been waiting?

The silence became embarrassing to Grace; she stirred as though to rise. Ewing held out his hand detaining her.

"Don't," he said. "I've waited for you here all day. Now you've come at last. Let me just look at you, gaze at you, won't you? You must know how beautiful you are."

She lifted her eyes, tremulous, to his.

"I long to fix your image on my memory forever as you are to-night—Grace."

"Why to-night?" There was a far signal of alarm in her lowered voice.

"Because to-night," Ewing answered very slowly, "you've made me happy. You've come to me."

"Oh," hastily she interrupted him, "I only came down because I wanted to let you know that things were all right."

"You've come to me alone." As he spoke these words, Ewing drew close to Grace, moved, stirred by her beauty. "Where I could see you and tell you."

"No, no," she broke in, herself alarmed, now that the declaration she had so long provoked was forming itself into an appeal that she must meet.

She must get away from him, stem the tempest that was coursing through her veins, making poor chaff of every thought that rose up in protestation on its course. She didn't love this man whose arms were folding about her. No, no!

"Stuart!" she cried.

But in that blinding emotion which impelled Ewing as one half mad, to let loose, in passionate ardor, expressions of love long pent up, he did not hear her warning of distress. He bent even closer, brushing at last his lips against her hair; murmuring his adoration; stooping to kiss her. But he was held back by Grace's cry. It rang out loud; it shook Ewing to the realization of others—who might hear—of another whose name was on Grace's lips.

"Stuart!" She caught her face in her hands, half sobbing, miserable. Now that it had come, this confession of love—wrung from him, she could see, by the impelling charm she exerted over him, willingly exerted—it stung her into consciousness at last. So evident was the suffering caused by the first inflicted burning of that very fire with which she had longed to play, that Ewing drew back, disconcerted, baffled, too deeply moved to speak in any but the discordant key; preferring silence, yet watching with eagerness lest the least sign might indicate some token of surrender.

Grace sat immovable, as though the life had gone out of her. Her head was bowed, her hands folded. And Ewing, thwarted, vanquished by the sudden reversion in this woman who had invited his declaration, came gradually to feel exasperation at the scene in which he played so inadequate a part. Could he could not be to the extent which requires of a man that he use his force to triumph—and that in the house of his own friend. Slowly thus, his irritation, diverting his feelings from the woman by his side to himself, took form.

Grace in her agitation had murmured her husband's name.

"Think of Jack!" she had cried. Think of him? Yes, he would think of him; he did; and the result of his meditation was an exclamation unexpected by Mrs. Thorndyke and which startled her to attention.

"Poor Jack!" Ewing threw the words against his teeth. "Yes, poor old Jack!"

Grace roused herself.

"Poor old Jack?" she said harshly. "Why do you say 'poor'?" The insinuated reproach, under these circumstances, was repellent to her.

Ewing threw back his head and, with a slight upward movement of his shoulders, thrust his hands behind him.

Grace insisted. "Poor?" She was almost glad of some excuse to revert to his physical sufferings. "You don't mean just on account of his accident? You've been through worse yourself, Stuart."

Ewing shrugged again. His manner was suggestive, implicating. He had put into it all the ill humor of a man rebuffed when he had but his love to offer, and not the right, the honorable right, to offer it.

"What do you mean?" One tiny hand a frame against her cheek, Thorn-dyke's wife leaned forward eagerly, reiterating: "What do you mean by 'poor Jack'?"

There was in her tone a claim for personal exoneration. But it was not her possible temptation that Ewing had in mind.

He took a step up and down the ample hearth and formulated:

"Why, isn't any man to be pitied who——"

She caught the words. "Who what, Stuart?"

"Why, who has to seek consolation elsewhere when—when he's the husband of such a woman as you, Grace."

"What, in heaven's name, do you mean, Stuart Ewing?" she cried.

Watching the effect of his words, he said at last, very deliberately:

"Why, I supposed you knew."

"Knew?"

"Why, yes, to be sure, why not?"

Ewing's course being determined by the irritation of defeat, he was led to imply or to insinuate what he was not able to state. He saw that, with conflicting forces, Grace longed both to hear him and to silence him conclusively. His eyes avoided hers as he said:

"I fancied it was an open secret."

"Secret, secret," she repeated. "That what was an open secret?"

"Why, that Jack was not altogether incapable of distraction or consolation, or call it what you like. I guess you know what I mean."

Her own impulse toward the threshold of danger had alone occupied her thoughts and confused them in the first bewildering anguish of remorse. Now, suddenly, with an ugly flash that blinded, came the recollection of the "little thing." The flowers, her husband's card among them, and on the envelope, not her name but another woman's. It was but an instant that the picture danced before Grace's eyes, yet it seemed to alter the horizon of her vision.

Very slowly she got up from the chair in which she had been so helplessly held a moment before. The soft gown about her seemed to take lines more rigid as she drew herself up and looking directly at Ewing, said:

"You've chosen this time, Stuart, when Jack is lying ill as he is—and after the very words of love you've spoken but a moment ago—to insinuate to me, his wife, that his attitude toward me, his devotion, his fidelity, are not all that they should be?" She stopped. Her nostrils were quivering. There was a flood of tears pent up behind the clear eyes with which she fixedly stared at Ewing. Then very quietly she finished: "You have struck the wrong note."

She turned toward the door, leaving Ewing. He started forward. Unused to failure, it was intolerable to him that he should see his last hope of victory thus slipping from his grasp. He moved more quickly than Grace could, was at the door before her, tried even again to touch her arm, appealing, beseeching—but she was strong with the intensity of resistance. She flung from her his outstretched hand as though it had been the bearer of some harm.

"Don't touch me," she said very low. "I feel as though I could not go far enough to get you out of my sight, and out of my mind, after what you have insinuated."

"I supposed of course you knew." Ewing pled for himself, desperate, un-

used to failure and failing in all ways. Here was but the suggestion needed to unsettle that control which had so far kept his hearer as a stoic. Grace might perhaps have listened to what Ewing said had it not been that, since the last few hours, her own mind had harbored a suspicion. The suddenness of Ewing's revelation might—had it taken her unawares—have shaken her into disloyalty. But now the "little thing" was Jack Thorndyke's surest voucher. The slight undermining of Grace's own faith in him served as his breastwork of defense. Such was the cruel conflict with which emotions clashed in Grace Thorndyke's truly feminine mind, but whatever the motive, her loyalty rang true in the utter contempt with which she left Ewing, dazed and unable to recover himself.

Thorndyke's escape had been miraculous; but there was the other danger hovering aloof. Thorndyke knew nothing of the peril; he breathed and dozed like a man recovered, his eyes closed yet in the healing sleep. It was his wife who held the craft now in her guidance. Would she bring it against the shores that had so fettered her and leave it there a wreck—the little love-laden craft which had so eagerly sought to put in at the port of happiness? Would she steer it safe? Under the swift stroke which had thrust upon her the necessity to act, Grace Thorndyke was rousing to the best in her—the best in any woman—to her impelling instinct. With that fixed will which is all a woman's strength, she was now facing a fact, determined not to "let it be true." That same fact which a few hours before she had fancied wilfully it was her right, if she so pleased, to believe, she now, since Ewing's daring insinuations, was persistently denouncing to herself.

In such a frame of mind she sat and waited alone; for Jack lay on the broad white bed with his eyes closed, still as though he, too, were waiting.

Waiting for what? Grace asked herself, with a shudder that suggested there might be in his mind some image of the scene from which she had but

just escaped. There was a growing inward distrust of what she had done. She had been wrong; it was her fault, all that had happened. Oh, the misery of this loneliness! Would Jack never, never wake, never speak to her again?

There were only the glow of the little night-lamp and the subdued flare of the wood-fire to light the room, enveloping it with delicate, playful shadows that flattered the pale tints of the gray carpet and the pink wall coverings.

Gradually, as Grace sat watching, waiting, the old sentiments of security awoke, were reassuring. The inward point of view, unscathed, recovered balance, became the only one. So the little craft drifted momentarily on placid waters whence a sudden warning of actual peril was to force it upon its final course.

Jack stirred at last. He did not open his eyes, but there was a restless fluttering of his breath. Then silence. And then a name, a name on Jack Thorndyke's lips. Eager, intent to desperation, Grace seized the sound, caught it—heard the name. Her name? No. It was not her name that the sick man, returning to consciousness, had uttered, not the name of his wife. It was the name of the other woman, the name she had seen in that one swift glance at the envelope that lay among the orchids.

The wall of adoration that had hemmed in this heart was beginning to crumble at last; the golden bars of the cage were slipping far apart; the chains that had chafed hung loose. And in this first shock of freedom, Grace caught sight of the ugly danger that had threatened—was threatening still. She came, in this short moment, to full consciousness at last.

With awkward rapidity, her mind seized at the thoughts that traversed it, tracing and retracing the past, flying forward into the future, planning, making a whole life anew, pleading with Fate, entreating Destiny for the other chance. Action, swift, decisive, instantaneous, alone could save them now. Her chance had come—that other chance by which so many women pass,

unheeding. How easy to forgive when she had craved forgiveness; divined, in hope, the sweetness of it!

Gathering her loose gown about her, she crept over to the bedside, knelt there, placing her head near her husband's, her arm beneath his pillow.

"Jack," she whispered. "Dearest, dearest!" The tears had welled up into her eyes. They lay on her lashes, on her cheek. Her face was very close to his. He moved, he turned and, waking, looked at her. There was astonishment in his voice, feeble yet.

"Grace," he murmured, "not weeping?"

"Oh, Jack, darling!" She drew herself up by his side. Even in this first listless rousing, he could perceive her agitation and it made him happy.

"Did they think I was done for?" he whispered.

A sob catching at her throat, she answered: "It's joy I'm crying for."

Oh, so close it was she had bent over him; and yet he did not dare. But she spoke for him: "Jack, kiss me."

And while she lay there enfolding him against her, she talked in little broken sentences that seemed to her husband to be the stirring of an angel's wings in some new paradise where he had awakened. The sweet breath of the haven—how could he know whence it had blown?—the course had seemed so outward bound, against the tide that, turning suddenly, it roused now his

fondest hopes. Tenderness? She was the personification of it; leaning, warm and aglow, against him; so fair and exquisite a vision, he feared to see her brilliancy dispelled by the ardor of his own gaze as the dewdrop vanishes in the sun's devouring ray.

She murmured low, caressing sounds that healed the farthest recesses of his soul which loneliness had clogged, he fancied, for all time.

"If you only knew how happy you make me!" he whispered, radiant, tightening the clasp of his arms about her while she bent down and let him take the kiss she offered. In that touch, perhaps, did her stifled doubt a moment stir again; for Jack, as to some appeal that needs definitive dismissal, exclaimed with something like a curse:

"Good God, Grace, I'd pity the person who ever tried to come between you and me!"

"And I, too, dearest," she echoed.

Thorndyke's wife smiled, an illuminating smile of contentment and of victory.

It had come—the other chance—and not too late; that chance to be won herself at last, in winning the man who worshiped her; and to show that his love alone tempted her to conquest.

Without so much as a small cry of distress, amid the tempest hovering aloof, Grace Thorndyke was bringing the little love-laden craft into the safe harbor of happiness.

REMEMBRANCE

REMEMBER only days of love and laughter,
The song of summer and the lilt of Spring;
Forget, dear Heart, the winter coming after,
Remember love—forget the wearying.

Forget the end of love, its waning hour,
The fading and the failure at the close;
Forget, dear Heart, that love was but a flower,
And now lies dead—a fragile summer rose.

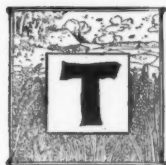
Remember only love, and not the leaving;
Remember only pleasure; not the pain.
For you the dream—and mine the undecieving;
For you the song, dear; mine the sad refrain.

TORRANCE BENJAMIN.



DIVORCE

By
Caroline Duer



THE relation of people to each other—of nation to nation, community to community, individual to individual—is surely the most important thing in the whole civilized world. So important is it and so much has man grown to fear the non-fulfilment of his duty toward his fellow and his fellow's duty toward him, that he has invented contracts innumerable, binding himself and others to keep whatever oaths they make, to the end that "he who sweareth unto his neighbor" must look to it that he "disappoint him not"—disappoint him not *legally*, at least, until the time of contract has expired.

Apparently oaths must be sworn to for the sake of security, but they need not be made to cover too long a period. For the changes and chances of this mortal life succeed each other so rapidly nowadays, that from the greatest ruler on earth to the smallest errand-boy or girl, for that matter, everybody has become exceedingly chary of making anything in the nature of a limitless agreement.

Following Emerson's advice we have begun to take "short views," allowing for the mutability of human affairs, permitting ourselves an "if" or a "but" or a time clause or a mutual-consent termination in every compact *save and except* the marriage compact.

Here is a hard-and-fast, covenant, supposably for life, made easier to enter into and more difficult to escape from than any other, depending for its supportableness upon the strength of two people to go on caring for one an-

other indefinitely, if not with the same tenderness as at first, at least in ways that shall be tolerable to each.

Now, in the conduct of commerce, of the arts and sciences, of high and low finance, in almost every phase of intercourse but this—we arrange for certain contingencies which may bring about a dissolution of existing conditions. We prepare ourselves to change in our opinions, in pride, in ability, in ambition, in wisdom and understanding, but in the most variable of all powers—the power to love—no! That is to remain as fixed as the pole; as steadfast as the North Star. The law arranges for it and the church demands it. Demands it—in spite of every readiness to accord the privilege—with a solemnity that only the constant repetition of usage has enabled us to hear unappalled. The accustomed sense has robbed the words of half their significance, but the significance is there.

You are to love, honor and obey, says the priest, or love, honor and cherish this person, and this person only, to the end of your natural existence. And the man and woman answer: "I will." Simply and positively taking Heaven to witness that they pledge themselves to do what may become at any time impossible.

"To serve and to obey?" Yes, perhaps. "To take for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, forsaking all others and keeping each to each so long as they both shall live?" Again, yes, perhaps, so much might be promised by the decent average with a chance of fulfilment. But to love and honor always, no matter what the development of the years may bring! The most discreet answer to this is the moderate one to be

found in the catechism: "That is my desire."

Take a boy and girl with only the young spring sparkle in their hearts when they make their vows. How can they know that what they feel is youth calling to youth—impulsive, impelling—and not character choosing character? How can they know, and whose word would they take for it, that this fire will die down and leave them staring at each other, as at strange faces, across an empty hearth? The will to possess what we desire is instinctive, but the wisdom to foresee to what passes such possession may bring us is acquired by experience. And who ever learns by any experience but his own?

Youth that was staid, cautious, far-seeing, given to counting the cost, would lose its fundamental charm—the charm of unconscious, happy belief in itself and the things it does *not* know. Wherefore—because of which belief—it makes mistakes, wilfully, blindly; and age cannot help it with counsel or admonition. It laughs, and loves, and marries in the most offhand way, as indeed its parents did before. But in this much has it altered the old fashion of behavior, that if it should happen to repent its bargain, a sufficient proportion of it takes the shortest path to freedom.

Divorce is like all expensive luxuries, only for those who can afford it; but in these times a goodly number of persons can, and do. With some there is no question of its necessity. The days are gone when women submitted to every indignity a coarse, brutal or drunken husband could inflict, and men endured the companionship of evilly disposed wives.

The emancipation of the individual, especially as regards the Eves of the world, has brought different standards into view. People have begun to ask very seriously whether the innocent must always suffer with and for the guilty? Whether the delicate are to be bruised and torn by the violent? If one creature has no right to escape the harmful contact of another; no reason for flinging aside ignoble obligations and developing its higher possibilities?

The respected grandmothers of the present generation had rather the attitude of considering any husband better than none. They looked upon a bad one as a sort of divine cross to be borne with uncomplaining meekness, while a good one was a combination of honored charge and law-maker to whom everything must give way.

The respected mothers of the present generation were therefore more or less accustomed to bullying from those fine old rugged gentlemen, their fathers, and they arrived at a marriageable age prepared—if not entirely subdued—for masculine supremacy. They may have permitted themselves—slyly—to think long thoughts when their liege lords were unusually positive and dictatorial, but they avoided discussions, and in the main accepted the opinions and bowed to the decrees of those whose names they bore.

But the women of to-day look for companionship, for equally given love, for equally shared interests, for equal freedom of character; so they tell us. They do not wish to be managed, like their grandmothers; or to manage "unknownst" as did their mothers. They have reached a point whence they propose that individuals shall be free, even in bonds, to manage themselves; and some of them have not the wherewithal—the mental poise and discretion—to do it successfully.

To the onlooker it appears that warm-heartedness and the sense of responsibility to others—once the attributes of all home-making women—are not being increased, to say the least of it, by the education of that very pretty, perplexing, pleasure-seeking product, the spoilt girl of the leisure classes. Not that all girls of the leisure class are spoiled, by any means, but that among those who *are*, the lack of discipline is particularly conspicuous.

It might be fairer, perhaps, not to specify the feminine element alone in this connection, for the spoilt girl's brother may have grown up owning no wider outlook upon life than she; but again, as in the matter of divorce, the woman is generally the first to beg for

liberty, it would seem as if attention had better be directed toward her independencies and her limitations, and the reasons, if any, for her matrimonial failures.

In the first place, the modern maiden is not expected to take any active part in household administration. The complications of luxurious living demand a system of domestic machinery with which it is unnecessary to meddle. She hears an order given and sees the consummated result. Any effort required in the attaining of that result goes on outside her ken. Housekeeping as it was *near* the beginning is not now, and probably never shall be again; and to cry out for the times when great ladies universally visited their larders, mended their best linen, minded their maids, gave out supplies from the storeroom, and kept a kind of dispensary for the sick and sorry, would be absurd.

And yet contact with the intimate affairs of a big house—if not the actual conduct of them—taught a girl patience, consideration, resourcefulness and a certain amount of tact in dealing with several sorts and conditions of people. Moreover, if she were the elder sister of a large family of children she had often a deputy-mother's responsibility toward the younger ones, and this tended to develop unselfishness, tenderness and endurance; no bad qualities to bring, by and by, to a wedding equipment.

Nowadays the families, large or small, of the well-to-do are so admirably watched and waited upon by nurses and governesses that no member of them need, of necessity, do anything for another. There is an entire lack of interdependence. Each child has his or her special guardians, and feels himself or herself of special importance.

Here again is a system of domestic machinery with which it appears difficult to meddle, and yet perhaps because such children grow up singly, as it were, instead of in groups; because they have too much done for them, and are in no sense obliged to rely upon one another for their welfare and happiness, each becomes of too much consequence

to itself, and learns to regard its own way as something of particular moment. And since, in these times and in this country, age is getting to be less and less self-assertive and youth more and more so, parents—especially those who have given their descendants advantages which they themselves did not possess—have begun to look with awe upon the dominant young genii they have unbottled, and to be cautious of interference where their fads and fancies are concerned.

When these boys and girls have leaped from precociousness into supposed maturity they have most likely attained the outward semblance of disciplined *conduct*, but their *characters*, underneath, are not disciplined at all; and as conduct that is not the outcome of character is apt to break down under strain, and the strain of matrimony is allowed, even by the happiest married people, to be at times severe, it is not amazing that in the test of this relationship they are frequently found wanting.

The young men, at least, have learned in the life of school and college that there are some periods to be got through only by endurance; some unspoken laws of give-and-take that must be respected even to one's own hindrance, let one be the son of never so rich or prominent a father; but their sisters at home, lightly and happily dining, dancing and generally amusing themselves—always petted, admired, flattered—come very soon to the conclusion that every pretty woman is a law unto herself. An idea which, when it is once fixed in a charming head without much balance, is extremely hard to eradicate.

The time when a pretty young woman first grows up is a time when all the world seems ready to make much of her, and it takes the saving grace of a tender, unselfish heart to keep the power of her other graces—the superficial ones—from spoiling her.

Suppose she has been brought up so far above the ground floor of existence, so to speak, that the real things of life, the workaday problems of human na-

ture, have never touched her; never taught her the lesson of forbearance? Suppose that a pretty face, a charming head—without balance—and a disposition accustomed to overindulgence are all she can bring to her husband? Suppose *he* does not possess any great amount of tact and patience? What will happen if he ceases to be enraptured by the pretty face and ruled by the charming head, and presently gives over indulging the disposition as slavishly as he did in the first silver months of the honeymoon?

Both will be disappointed and disillusioned, and very likely each will feel that the other is entirely to blame. And perhaps, having no vital interest in one another—beyond the infatuation which first drew them together—nor in life—except as a condition which ought to be more amusing than it is—they may drift apart, each following the bent of easy inclination; and even while they continue to inhabit the same house, they may carelessly let go the comradeship, the intimacy, the sympathy that might still have made happiness for them.

Or else the woman—utterly regardless of anything but that a mistake has been made and that she does not propose to sacrifice the rest of her good days to a man who is unamiable, or who does not amount to much, or who just plainly bores her—the woman may snatch at any excuse the law allows her for freedom, and divorce the man as triumphantly, it may be, as she married him.

He, to do him justice, seldom if ever divorces her except for real cause, and when pushed to the utmost limit—as indeed why should he, being by conventionality so much freer than she? But he acquiesces in her method of procedure when he does not indorse it, and he regards the gentleman who succeeds him—if there is one—with generally unembarrassed and unenvious eyes.

And this—this light parting of persons who have undertaken the most serious responsibilities toward each other—is the kind of dissolved marriage-contract that people are beginning to look upon as an evil to be checked.

The present period seems to be one of transition. In older times when the bargain was a bargain through thick and thin, human nature, being so constituted that it adjusts itself to what it considers inevitable, adjusted itself to this with surprising quickness and comparative resignation; in days to come we may—who can tell?—in its present form do away with it altogether; but just at present there are no people so free that they cannot be bound or so bound that they cannot be free, and the condition is unsettling.

Like many other unsettling conditions it will right itself in time, but whether the church or the law can hasten the process is open to question. Most enduring reforms grow out of the gradually accumulated needs of the people, made manifest by the people. The majority of men and women are still committing and enduring matrimony with a certain hopefulness, and looking askance—not so much askance as they used, perhaps, but yet askance—at those who for mere selfishness or wantonness cast aside all obligations. The hue and cry against this species of rupture proves it.

But if the majority of men and women should decide that "home, and the love of wedded wife and child" are in many cases a delusion and a snare, doubling care and halving pleasure, to say nothing of hampering the freedom of individual development, then they will evolve some other condition, or set of conditions, which shall meet new requirements; and it seems unlikely that any legislation, clerical or secular, can help until it is *invited*, rather than *imposed* upon them.

If it could help, one might be tempted, on the ground that prevention is better than cure, to suggest that instead of the proposed trial-marriages, a year's betrothal should be legally demanded—up to a certain age—with a possible dispensation in certain cases. This, if hasty unions are the causes of divorce, might militate against them, and would remove the opprobrium of interference and opposition from mild parental shoulders.

But one doubts if the essential root of the trouble is to be found in hasty unions. Ill-advised choice is not always hurried choice. The fault seems to be in the unwillingness of people to make the best—under ordinary circumstances—of the thing chosen. In the name of love so much is demanded, and from disappointed expectations such vehement protests come! Men and women show themselves so little gentle, so little patient, so little considerate of each other's point of view the moment that precious thing, glamour, has died down between them; the point where both require generous judgment.

"Can two walk together except they be agreed?" asks some wise man in the Scriptures. Once upon a time the woman did all the agreeing, and she was not entirely *unhappy*. Now she seems to be pretty generally *agreed with*, and she is not yet entirely happy either.

Until individual development—about which there seems to be a great to-do—reaches a point where it struggles to *understand* as earnestly as it is struggling to be *understood*; where it is ready to *give* as much as it *demand*s, agreement is going to be difficult. And until there can be two perfect wholes in one establishment, there had better be two as perfect halves as possible; or even one passable whole made up of a quarter and three-quarters—not mentioning which is intended for the masculine and which the feminine amount.

The philosophy of pity, patience and

tolerance, the possession of a good temper and a just appreciation of other people's rights, the ability to put self aside and give help where help is needed, would make marriage, even without love, a very tolerable institution. But these things do not grow up like Jack's beanstalk in a single night. They are the qualities of characters that have been trained by wisdom or have learned by experience.

And how are boys and girls, from whom all responsibility and most trouble are kept, to learn the unselfishness, the endurance, the consideration that human nature demands of human nature? Whether their term of years together were to be six or sixty, surely the happiness of it would depend upon attributes such as these; yet in many cases they are altogether lacking.

If parents doubt their own powers; if they feel at a disadvantage before this vigorous, upspringing, overbearing, self-confident thing called youth; if they are unable or unwilling to teach it; at least they might give life the opportunity. They might throw their children into wider surroundings, leave off overcossetting and protecting them, let them see suffering, bear disappointment, understand sorrow, take part—in no matter how small a degree—in the work of the workaday world; so shall they perhaps lose the excess of egoism which, later, makes married life between them such an apparently unsatisfactory condition.



BY LEVEL, LINE AND RULE

BE mine to harvest or to sow,
To break the ground or reap the grain,
Or if the warm or chill winds blow
In sunshine or in rain.

If dull the task sharp be the tool,
And on the lips of Toil a song;
'Tis still by level, line and rule,
The old world moves along.

LEE FAIRCHILD.

THE WHITE HANDS OF MISS DARROW



BY FRANCIS WILLING WHARTON



HE two Miss Vincents sat on the wide piazza of the Chrome House, side by side, reading two red-covered paper novels. If you had gone quite close to them you would have seen that they were not really reading at all but inspecting their fellow guests from the corners of their eyes. The elder Miss Vincent, having very round eyes with very little corner to them, could easily be discovered in her innocent deception; the younger Miss Vincent, Ellen by name, was helped by long slim eyes and a larger supply of eyelashes.

It was very hot, four o'clock in the afternoon, a time when every one's nature takes its most pronounced tone, and Margery Vincent had become completely submissive to the decrees of fate while Ellen was growing stubbornly rebellious.

Since fate had ordained them few acquaintances, little money, the advantages of neither dress nor beauty, Margery felt it to be quite natural that they were sitting dully on the long porch, without horses to ride, lawn-tennis to play or young men to talk to them.

Not so Ellen. Her long-smoldering resentment broke out at last as she saw another set at tennis made up by two ugly, capable girls with very short skirts and very big feet and rubber bands on their wrists, who were dividing amicably between them two less ugly, less capable young men with pleasant voices. Ellen was so made that a

man's voice generally sounded pleasantly in her ears. She shut her book and turned somberly to Margery.

"I'm going to row on that nasty little river," she said. "Will you come?"

"To row!" Margery hesitated, took a look at the hot world beyond the piazza's shade, and added: "It's too hot, Ellie. Don't go."

Ellen stood up beside her; she had a slender, strong young figure, but she should never have worn blue.

"Not go, and if I stay home what will you offer me?" Her voice sounded dangerous, and Margery got into her book for shelter.

"Nothing special, dear; only this cool piazza, that's all."

"I prefer the river, beastly as it no doubt may be," was Ellen's curt reply, and she dropped her book by her sister. "Take it to our room when you go," she said, and giving a little pull to her hat, she moved out into the heat.

Her way led first through the seaside village, then across a hot field and into a sparse ugly wood; and as she traversed its unlovely thicket her soul was black within her.

"Twenty-three," she thought, "and without a lover—Robert don't count—no money beyond decent maintenance in economical places, few friends somehow and fewer relations!"

She longed for a cousin or an aunt with a kind of bitter desire. Some one on your side in the game of life, some one who ought to be there, some one who would have a big country house, perhaps, and week-end parties, or even a small town house and nights at the opera. The only cousins they had were

third in degree and had never noticed their existence from the time their mother had died many years before.

At this point in her reflections Ellen reached the river and the boat-house in charge of a small boy. She chose one from a number of rather dirty skiffs, and getting into it, regardless of what she knew ought to be her clean frock for at least two days more, she exercised one of her small accomplishments and rowed swiftly away from the hated shore.

It had been diabolically hot, that horrid shore, but as she reached the middle of the small stream a little air seemed to stir; and rowing in a kind of passion away from every one, she felt that a blessed peace might later descend upon her troubled soul, though it was still to come.

The river which, as she had said, was rather nasty at the boat-landing, grew less so as it wound along between marshy shores; and ahead of her she saw a big, dark, shady wood that stole down to the very bank. It was a long way off but she was strong, young, and in a black temper still; one can do a good deal under those circumstances, and she did reach it half an hour later feeling as though her arms were pulled out of their sockets.

She rowed up under the shade of the bank of trees, and there slackening her pace, only just kept the boat moving. She felt as though she was made of fire, her cheeks burned like coals, but she had crawled out of that black pit she had been in, and hanging on to the edge of it, she looked out at the world and saw that it was fair; emboldened, she even drew herself up mentally and sat on the outer edge of her depression, ready to drop back into it, and yet for the moment in another atmosphere.

The worst of the sun's heat had declined, it was five o'clock and the touch of his rod was less castigating than it had been; and there among the trees he could not reach you except by little pokes among the fretwork of the leaves.

She stopped her boat, took off her hat, and taking water in her two hands, splashed her face and then dried it on

her pocket-handkerchief; and plunged first one arm, then the other, into the water up to the elbow. How good it felt! She was cooling off and feeling that kind of physical pleasure that lies in strength exerted without real fatigue—only just the let-down that makes the rest and coolness a boon and joy.

She leaned over and saw her face in the water, for the surface of the stream was still and green beneath the trees. Ah! There she was! Her old problem came back on her—herself; she had forgotten the tiresome thing for a moment; Ellen Vincent to be disposed of somehow.

She got out of the boat, catching at a bough to steady herself, and clambered up the bank, and lying down upon it, made up a dream.

A young rich Scotchman with dark eyes appeared on a yacht in the harbor, dropping out of the sky it seemed, and asked her to dance at the hotel hop, and—of course—fell in love with her! It didn't take him long and she was just beginning to like him quite a little in return when her dream was shattered by her hearing a scream that choked suddenly, ended in another sound, and began again less loud.

In a moment she was up in her boat, pushed out in the stream, and rowing toward a canoe which she saw capsized in the middle of the river; and for once certainly she was not a superfluous addition to the scene.

A man was trying to save a golden-headed girl, who was as certainly going to drown him and herself in five minutes as anything Ellen had ever seen. Every moment they got farther and farther from the capsized canoe, and his expostulations, remonstrances, threats even, didn't stop for a moment those mad movements, those clutches round his neck, those ineffectual cries.

But then Ellen happened to be there, and in much less than five minutes the half-drowned man heard a clear, hard young voice with something in it that he never forgot, calling to him.

"Don't bother!" it said. "Let her clutch you. I'll be there in a minute, just keep up—now."

And the bow of a boat slid up to him. "Look out," he said thickly—he was not left much use of his windpipe—"she'll capsize you when she sees you." "I'd hit her with an oar if she tried," said the voice.

He couldn't see much, he had a mist over his eyes, but in a moment he felt the weight on him lighten, one of those horrible little clutching white hands was gone, he saw it transferred to the side of the boat, saw it cling there, then the other; and in a moment he had gathered himself together, swept the water and the horror from his eyes, and was climbing over the stern of the boat; falling into it, he first took a breath and then rapidly passed to the bow, where, balancing on his knees, he caught those white hands which seemed to hold like steel hooks.

"If I can get her to the stern I can get her in," he said, and for the first time to his vision a face joined itself to that hard, unfrightened voice. It was a cool, unfrightened face with long slim eyes that were hot like molten steel, set in rather a white setting.

The face nodded. "I'll get into the bow to balance a bit," said the voice.

With a sort of mingled relief and repugnance he lifted the white hands, dragged their almost unconscious owner to the stern, and then leaning down and catching her under the arms, managed somehow to drag her into the boat. He got her flat in the bottom, her head on the stern seat, and took up the oars, but he felt a light touch on his shoulder.

"I'll row," said that third presence in the boat. "You are done up—get into the bow and rest. She is coming to. When we get up to the canoe we will get it right-side up and tow it or something. Can you paddle it if I take her?"

"Of course," he returned hoarsely—he had swallowed quantities of water. "One of the paddles is caught in it. I was lighting a cigarette when she tried to get up, we upset, and she caught me as we rose."

Ellen felt a sense of amusement at his voice, it expressed such pained con-

tempt for that white-dressed figure in the stern whose hands he was chafing; no doubt he had persuaded her to come out with him with pleading and perhaps tenderness.

The figure stirred and opened its big blue eyes, closed them, tried to sit up a little, and at last did so for a moment; then dropped its wet golden head on the seat again. This proving there was nothing really wrong with her, they proceeded to work, got the canoe to rights, and found the paddles. He transferred himself to it, and so they rowed and paddled in silence, with only a word or two to punctuate it, back to the hotel-landing.

II.

Margery had seldom enjoyed anything so much as Ellen's account of her adventure. She sat on the side of their bed and gasped and gurgled, and made certainly as satisfactory a listener as a sister could desire; and when it was all over, she it was who suggested that Ellen should wear her cream-colored lawn in honor of the occasion and the hop that night combined.

"I will wear my mauve," she added, with infinite tact, evading any idea that Ellen was after all dressing for her new acquaintance. "We so seldom have an out-of-the-way time, don't we? And then we want to wear them sometimes, so why not to-night?"

Ellen gave her a little touch of appreciation. It is much pleasanter not to be the one to suggest that you should beautify yourself, and she wanted to look well. They dressed with much harmless chatter, which they had had little of in the last few days, and went down to their tea feeling ten years younger than they had at lunch-time.

They heard vague rumors about them of a Miss Darrow who had been nearly drowned, but as she was at another hotel none connected Ellen with "some one in a rowboat," but the mauve and cream-colored lawns seemed to have a magic of their own. Even Margery was led off to the dance, and Ellen enjoyed several brisk turns with two

young men she had a bowing acquaintance with.

One of them left her at last at her own request on the wide, dark, cool piazza after their dance, asking her to keep another for him, and hurried off to fulfil engagements which she had interrupted.

She sat looking out toward the lawns beside the hotel, which ended abruptly in an ugly grove of maples—ugly by day but picturesque by night. She was not conscious of being tired, the dancing had but brought a pleasant glow. She danced well, but it had taken the cream-colored lawn to suggest to her two partners to find it out. She had felt stubborn on the other gala nights of the hotel, and come in, in the dress she usually wore; but to-night she did not feel stubborn, it was a relief not to have a weight inside but something that fluttered lightly.

She heard a quick step approaching her.

"Miss Vincent?"

She knew the voice. She looked up and saw her comrade of the afternoon's adventure looking down on her.

"I don't believe you know me." He began to smile a little. "I was not looking my best on our first acquaintance. I haven't got the water out of me yet, either. Would you have known me for the man whose life you made him a present of this afternoon?"

She was in no hurry; she, too, smiled a little.

"On the whole, yes," she said slowly. "Only I did very little; being there with the boat was the point."

He drew up a chair, and leaning against it, stood looking at her through the semiobscurity of the porch, lit only by the light coming from the windows of the dancing-room.

He was a squarely built man of middle height, whose clothes and air proclaimed him as belonging to that world of fashion with which she had only a formal acquaintance. He had a heavily cut face with eyes sunk deep under the brows, and a strong bridge to the blunt nose, and a big mouth with mobility and humor to distinguish it. He looked

like a lover of pleasure and beauty who had perhaps forgotten any other existence than the one he led.

"May I sit down?" he went on. "You don't ask me to, but unless you object I shall do so."

She gave a little nod; and being used to protestations from women, he was amused.

"I have come, of course, laden with thanks." He noticed a small satirical smile that touched her fresh, curved lips. "Not only to give thanks, to tell the truth, but——"

"To receive them," cut in Miss Vincent gently. "You shall have them. I was bored to death this afternoon and your upset was a Godsend."

Their eyes met in the shock of understanding, and they both laughed.

"How good you are to lighten my load of gratitude! I will confess that I had not regarded the event in the light of an amusement!" He laughed again, and rather expected her to soften her speech, but she still looked at him with eyes gleaming like burnished steel between their long lashes. It struck him that the creamy, lacy dress that she wore was becoming, and he was glad that it was no longer blue.

"What I began to say," he proceeded, "was that I felt that this afternoon had almost made friends of us, and I wanted to come and receive your assurance that a little time would complete the process." He stopped, and then, not dissatisfied with her silence, continued: "You did a great many different things for me this afternoon. You saved my life and I happen to be one of the people who want to live it to the end; and then you supplied me with a new respect for women. Let me make a horrid confession—my supply was very low."

She had turned a little in her chair and was facing him, listening intently. Her eyes were registering every detail of his appearance, and all sorts of ideas about him were the product of her keen wits and imagination. At the end of his speech she gave a little shrug to her shoulders.

"It depends on what you seek," she

answered. "There are plenty of women to respect, but to be respected one must be at times inconvenient. Perhaps you have not looked for inconvenient women."

He leaned forward, his long-fingered hands on his knees. "What an unkind, cynical comment! Do I look a moral wreck? And be careful what you say, for there is, I believe, a connection between us of which you are not aware. Have you any idea what my name is?"

She shook her head and stared eagerly at him, some warning of the truth coming to her from a certain resemblance in him to her father, that she noticed for the first time.

"My name is Vincent," he went on, "and your name is Vincent. That would not prove much, were it not that we have hardly any relations on that side, barring Edge Vincent who had two daughters. Are you really one of the daughters?"

She looked at him through a haze of such happiness as he was perfectly unaware of. A cousin—her cousin!

"Oh, yes," she answered, "my father's name was Edge. Is your father's name George?"

Vincent nodded, and throwing out his hands, he laughed.

"Think of it!" he said. "That just you and I should have got tangled up in that river! You don't know half how funny it is—shall I tell you?—well, perhaps later, but first let us shake hands." He held out his hand, and she laid her small, brown, closely knit, strong hand in it. Vincent pressed it a moment; then, still holding it, turned it over and looked at it.

"Just the palm I should expect," he murmured. "How clever father was!" He looked up at her. "Are you Margery or Ellen?"

She started in surprise that he knew their names. "My name is Ellen," she said, "and yours, at a venture, is Edge?"

"Mine certainly is Edge; and well-named, for I am always on it—good and bad—and never get there." He still held her hand lightly, and now gave it another pressure before he let it go. "I

think I shall have to be terribly indiscreet and tell you something my father said to me just before he died four years ago: This is a moment for indiscretion—being half-drowned makes one emotional. Ever since you appeared on the scene this afternoon and I heard that cool voice of yours, I have lived in a highly colored world with a mystical slant to it." He drew his chair close to hers, and bent his smiling eyes on her. "Shall I be indiscreet? Decide for me."

She felt something compelling in the air, and being naturally fearless, she obeyed her own emotion. He was quite near to her, nearer than she had ever let a young man come before, but it seemed quite right.

"By all means, be indiscreet," she said. "Am I not your cousin? With a cousin nothing is an indiscretion."

Vincent, watching her, gave a deep laugh of physical and mental enjoyment, which was one of his characteristics.

"Very well," he answered. "Only do not forget what you have just said—we will come back to that later on—you have committed yourself my cousin." He turned and looked out into the dark a moment as people do when they are remembering a scene which recreates itself before them from the past.

"I was twenty-seven," he began, "and my father had had time enough to know my disposition, and at times to regret it. One afternoon when we were sitting on the piazza at the Vale, our place—you have never been there, have you? Well, we were sitting looking over the lawn toward the glade that is our special affection. I can see it with that peculiar sunset light on it now. He gave me one of those keen, cool looks of his—like yours—and said: 'Edge, my boy, you have some Vincent in you to fight the Harvey, but not enough, and I tell you what I want you to do. Do you remember my telling you once that I was in love with one other woman before I met your beautiful mother? That woman was Ellen Morris, and she married my cousin Edge Vincent and died many years ago. Well, she left two

daughters. I have never seen them, but I have a belief that one of those girls combining the hard rectitude of the Vincents and Ellen Morris' power of understanding and forgiving would make you just the wife you need. Don't forget this; learn to know them, and find out whether my instinct is correct. Don't marry a beautiful Bird of Paradise as I did and give your son too many vain and selfish instincts to fight with; you have enough of your own."

Vincent stopped and met the concentrated gaze of Ellen's eyes. They dropped before his, but in the dark he could not see if her color had deepened. His expression changed and he laughed.

"Well, what did I do? Avoided my cousins like poison, and fled in other directions, any other direction; and meeting the Bird of Paradise, I became bewitched by the beauty of her plumage and told her so, and I became engaged to be married three months ago! Ellen, will you congratulate me?"

She sat very still, looking at him. He could not be aware that about her ears her castle was falling, tumbling in horrid stone masses that cut and crushed her—that castle of a moment's building. He could see only that small smile with which she met those sharp cuts; then she took up a piece of the castle and used it as a weapon.

"So you are engaged to marry *her*," she said, and when the words were out, she stood by the cold, contemptuous reflection in them, and yet she knew how hard they were. She still met his eyes, though she had grown a trifle paler.

Vincent brought his lips together savagely.

"Yes," he said, "I am engaged to marry *her*. But there are ways out of it, drowning among them." He gave a sort of tired laugh, and then Ellen behaved in a way that Margery would have wept to see.

She sat upright; it brought their faces close together.

"Don't!" she said. "Don't! Marriage isn't like drowning, it takes a great deal longer; you cannot have

those miserable, weak white hands clutching your throat through a lifetime. I can see them now, I never saw a sight like them, they would drive one mad. Don't do it!"

Then she found her eyes within eighteen inches of his, and meeting his look, her lids fell and the blood of inexperience flooded her cheek.

Vincent laid his hand lightly on hers as it rested on the arm of her chair. "You are right," he said, "quite right; and if you want the truth I made up my mind to-night when I was taking off those wet flannels that life was too good to throw away, and that I would free myself and the woman that I had foolishly bound to me, if it took all the strength I had to do it."

Some instinct made him turn his head, and he rose and added: "Here comes Miss Darrow, Ellen, to thank you for your help this afternoon. You see she is none the worse for her bath." His voice had changed into a tone of pure mockery.

Ellen rose, also, and leaning against the porch railing, watched the advance of the beautiful girl who moved languidly and gracefully toward them with a man on either side of her. Her beauty was like a perfume on the night, it seemed to color the lights and enrich the darkness. Ellen was glad of the pillar behind her—for her heart fainted within her. Never, never could she hold her own—what man could turn from the contemplation of that beauty to her? She did not reckon with the Vincent-half of him.

She turned to him a look that, without her knowing it, conveyed her surrender of him, but his eyes met hers filled with savage mirth.

"Beautiful, yes," he murmured, "but do you think I forget the white fingers? My dear, I prefer courage to any other exhibition in life. My cousin with the resolute lips and dauntless eyes, you have armed me. But come, we must advance a step or two as homage to this queen; she is a queen and has so many subjects that she will hardly miss one. Come."

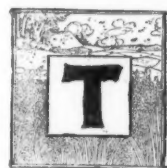
And they moved forward to meet her.



PLAYS AND PLAYERS

A FIRST NIGHTER

Authors and critics. A memorable list of failures this season. "The Easterner" is cheap and absurd. "Father and the Boys" near a failure. "Paid in Full" by a new dramatic author with a real play. Dustin Farnum's ability wasted in "The Rector's Garden." Komisarzhevsky an actress of wonderful psychological insight and truth. "The Fool Hath Said: 'There is no God'" not likely to be popular, but Mr. Sothern very appealing in the principal rôle. Sam Bernard in "Nearly a Hero" is really very funny



HE Association of Disgruntled Dramatic Authors met the other afternoon at a popular café on Broadway and held a long symposium on "What is the Matter with the American Public?" If anything pleasant was said about the poor public it has not leaked out, but the public has at least the satisfaction of knowing that it was voted to be only half as stupid and half as idiotic as the critics.

To get a list of the members of the Disgruntled Dramatic Authors all you have to do is to run over the list of the men who had successful plays produced last year.

With one exception all had failures this year. Fitch, Belasco, Klein, Ade, Armstrong, Peple; and now to add to the glory of the list, George Broadhurst, whose "Man of the Hour" has been one of the biggest successes in years, takes very near front position with his remarkable production, that it would be scant courtesy to call a play, "The Easterner."

The list of failures has indeed been

memorable, and if the critic were the Indian that the author and actor picture him, he could, pointing to the scalps, say that the pickings of the season have been unusually fine. But the critic, far from being the bloodthirsty person that he is pictured, is a mild-mannered individual, who wishes that all plays were successes and regrets very much that the public refuses to give up its small change to the needy author and manager.

Both of these individuals put more than the lion's share of blame on the critic, declaring that he is becoming too captious, that in his endeavor to be funny he has become malicious, and that by his continuous and professional attendance at the theater he has become afflicted with critical myopia.

Perhaps the public is weary of the defense of the critic, but surely the poor thing has some rights. Instead of the haughty opinionated person that he is pictured, he is generally a thin little man who trembles when his wife speaks to him, and as for being bored at the theater, that is all nonsense. He loves it, for on cold wintry nights it is a most comfortable place to go to when he is

afraid to go home. True it is that the musical comedies have more or less dampened his ardor about the playhouse, for most of them are so noisy that even a short nap is impossible. But despite this and a few other similar drawbacks, the critic loves the theater dearly.

And if there yet remains any doubt as to the critic's affection for the playhouse I would adduce but one more bit of evidence; the fact that the critics sat through George Broadhurst's play, "The Easterner," at the Garrick Theater. And the depth of their affection is further attested by the fact that it was a pleasant evening outside, and even if they didn't want to go home they could have walked around the block without any discomfort.

What Mr. Broadhurst was thinking of, when he wrote the play, and what Mr. Goodwin expected when he produced it, would make an interesting exhibition under a biconvex lens of great magnifying power.

The play sounds like an exercise in dramatic writing. It could hardly have been written since Mr. Broadhurst put on long trousers. "The Easterner," of course, is Mr. Goodwin, who is wealthy and a deputy sheriff. He is in love with the sister of a man accused of murder, and the attempt to interest the public in the piece is based on a series of supposedly hairbreadth escapes. In the second act the *Easterner* is obliged to turn over his prisoner to a mob of would-be lynchers. He pleads with them to think before they hang the man, and then for half an hour one has to listen to a lot of inane drivel about how the watch on the murdered man stopped in time to prove an alibi for the accused.

This cheap Wild-West-Theodore-Kremer stuff might have been tolerated; but in the last act we behold every member of the company moved all the way from California to accidentally meet on the dock of the Bermuda Steamship Company. Only a youthful and hurried dramatist would ever have conceived the idea of bringing such a varied aggregation such a distance for such a purpose. It really was worth the price of admis-

sion to hear the characters, who had all so suddenly decided to go to Bermuda, exclaim to one another as they come on: "What a surprise!"

And the dock of the Bermuda Steamship Company! It really was a gem. Usually in street scenes or dock scenes some endeavor to lend vraisemblance to the picture is made by introducing a policeman, or a newsboy. But this was the loneliest dock that we have ever seen. Not a policeman in sight, and not even a newsboy to say: "Who'll buy my papers?"

Perhaps Mr. Broadhurst's idea in keeping out the newsboy was to save expenses, for if he had been introduced Mr. Goodwin, as a rich Easterner, would surely have had to buy papers, and that would have been so much more per week to add to what is already a large and useless expenditure.

When will young authors get over the habit of writing foolish street scenes? The time has gone by when intelligent people will listen seriously to Gertrude Van Astobilt, heroine, standing on the corner of Fifth Avenue, talking to herself and telling herself a lot of secrets while Harold Deathface, villain, concealed behind a silk hat, listens until he is able to say:

"Now I know it *all*."

But why talk to the young dramatist or offer him advice when two such seasoned offenders as Broadhurst and Goodwin offer such an absurdity as this last act of "The Easterner."

Just what saves George Ade's new play, "Father and the Boys," produced at the Empire Theater, from being a failure, I do not know. Mr. William Crane's personal popularity has something to do with it, I suppose; the excellent stage management is another factor, and perhaps Mr. Ade himself has something to do with it. But near a failure it certainly is, and for the nearness there is only one person to blame, and that is Mr. Ade himself.

Either Ade will not or cannot learn the rules of playwriting—for rules there are, and by a man of Ade's ability they can be learned. And shall we lay it to indifference or laziness that he makes a

play out of an idea that is really suited to a twenty-minute vaudeville sketch?

Father, played by Mr. Crane, has made his fortune by strict application to business, and it is therefore a bitter disappointment to him when the two sons whom he has taken in as partners waste their time, the one with society and the other with athletics. They go so far in their belief that the old man is a "back number" that he pretends to rush off with an actress, and by that means brings the young men to their senses.

The love-plot of the play is unworthy of Mr. Ade at his weakest. *Father* wants his two boys to marry two young women of his selection, and we are all supposed to get very much excited, and be very much amused because each of the young men has selected a different girl of the same pair.

Where, oh, where is the Ade of yesterday? Like a sensible person he took a steamer for South America three days before the play was produced.

Mr. Crane was as usual, amiable, pleasant and very hard-working.

There was really one bright spot in the month, and that was the appearance of a new dramatic author with a real play. We get many new men in the course of the year, but few indeed who are worthy of welcome. Mr. Eugene Walter is very much of a beginner, but he is a good beginner, and while "Paid in Full" is far from a great play, it is deserving of great success.

Mr. Walter is one of the few younger writers to err on the side of over-masculinity. Most of the dramatists whose first works are offered for review are too much imbued with the theory, no matter how true, that the theater is supported by women. Plays about women's clothes, plays entitled "Girls," have had a maleficent influence on the young men writing for the stage, to the point that dramatic writing seems at times to be no longer a masculine pursuit.

Therefore, the welcome to Mr. Walter. His first play on Broadway is not a pleasant play and it is full of inconsistencies, but it is undoubtedly a play

written by a man and not by a young girl.

The first act shows the flat of a young married couple who are struggling along on eighteen or twenty dollars a week. The husband has grown weary of the struggle, and, as he appears in this act, he is only one of the thousands of unresourceful men who, finding the battle of life too unequal, are drifting into either socialism or dishonesty. He is pestered by a mother-in-law who is continuously pointing out that her daughter might have made a better match, and to add to this offense of pride, a former suitor of his wife offers to help him financially.

And then the last blow. The employer who underpays him, calls to insult him, discharges him and only takes him back at his wife's intercession. The act ends as the young man takes from a drawer part of the money belonging to his employer and invites his wife, who has been complaining that she needs amusement, to go to the theater.

In the second act the furnishings of the new apartment indicate that the young man's speculations have been kept up on no mean scale. The wife enters in splendid evening gown, and tells him how happy she is since he had his "raise" in salary. His employer suddenly enters, returning from a trip to South America, and looking about the luxurious apartment, says significantly that he will have a "nice long talk" with the young man to-morrow.

The former suitor then informs the thief that his employer has been back several days, that he has had experts working on the books at night, and that detectives are watching him and will stop any endeavor to escape.

Left together, the young man tells his wife the truth, that all the money they have been spending during the past couple of months was stolen, and he adds that it was her continuous complaining that forced him to it. As he did this for her she must now do something for him, she must at all costs save him from going to jail; and he tells her that she must go to his employer and use her "influence" with him. The in-

timation is not pleasant, and after the first horror of the suggestion, the wife, expressing her loathing for the husband she once loved, consents to go.

The third act shows the rooms of the employer, an ex-sea-captain and an utterly unscrupulous blackguard. He tells the friend who comes to plead for the husband that he will deal with the matter as he sees fit. He adds that he knew that the man would eventually go wrong, and that he had gone to South America just to see how far the thief would go.

Over the telephone the wife asks him to see her in his own apartments and then the captain, much to the surprise of the audience, reveals a new phase of his character. He tells her to come along and makes sotto-voce remarks to the effect that his admiration of her is of a purely respectable nature, and that he would gladly do anything to help her.

The wife arrives, and then ensues a long and somewhat drawn-out scene in which the captain intentionally gives the young woman a false impression as to his intentions by dwelling minutely and coarsely on the merits of the various women that he has loved. It is all, as it seems, a test of her character, and when finally by her rejection of his offers she shows that she is the woman that he believes her to be, he turns over to her a complete discharge of her husband's indebtedness to him. As the curtain comes down he remarks, again sotto voce and with much satisfaction: "Damned if it isn't good to be decent once in a while."

The fourth act shows the husband waiting. The wife enters and his first question is: "What did he say about me?" By this he only increases the wife's quickly mounting bitterness and disgust. After she has given him the proof that he will not be arrested for the theft he accuses her of obtaining his release by dishonorable means, and she leaves his house and him for good.

The great merit of the play is in its characterization and its sustained interest. All of the characters are real people, though in two instances the characters are so inconsistent as to

make one feel that the author has combined two plays, two entirely different dramatic ideas, in one. Up to the end of the second act the husband is simply a weak, unresourceful man who has been driven into crime simply because he could not bear to see his wife slaving her life away. At the end of the second act he suddenly looms up as an individual without a spark of decency.

Up to the third act the captain is without a single redeeming quality and then presto! the author makes him a paragon of virtue. Were the play less intense, were it less real, these defects would count much against its success, but under the circumstances they affect the impression only of those who, watching the author critically, expect him to take a prominent place among American dramatists.

Out of several other productions that came and went so quickly that one had to move lively, as the subway-guards say, to get them, there was one only that was worthy of mention, and that not because of the author but out of respect for the star. Mr. Dustin Farnum appeared just one week in "The Rector's Garden" at the Bijou and then quickly got in out of the cold. A clever, sympathetic and intelligent actor, he was wasted in this vegetable dramatic output by Mr. Byron Ongley. The play was dull and terrible, with all due respect to Mr. Byron Ongley, if that is the author's real name, though it sounds very much like a "wig."

The appearance of the great Russian actress, Komisarzhovsky, at Daly's Theater, though unsuccessful financially, was an event of more than a little importance. Even were the Russian herself less noteworthy we would be much indebted to her for bringing to us such a remarkable company of players as those who support her. Nowhere in the world, I believe, will one find finer ensemble acting, unless indeed it be in the Deutsches Theater in Berlin.

Komisarzhevsky lacks the personal magnetism of the golden-voiced Bernhardt, and the mysticism of Duse is not there, but if there were enough of her

countrymen in America to carry her past the first financial breakers her success would have been as great as either of these famous actresses on their first tour. True she is a stern realist, a rather forbidding thing in the theater where the fake realist is so popular.

In the three plays in which I have seen her, "A Doll's House," Sudermann's "Fires of St. John," and his "Battle of the Butterflies," she pictured three women of different emotional strata with wonderful psychological insight and truth. Her *Nora* appealed to me the least, for to tell the truth I am getting a little bit weary of the continuous and ever-recurring "Doll's House." It was, however, wonderfully clear and consistent.

As *Marrike*, in the second-named piece, her presence on the stage, even surrounded as she was by superb talent, was galvanic.

Having seen Miss Nance O'Neil in this same play at this same theater several years ago, it was particularly profitable to note the wonderful differences. The endeavor to "play the part" for all that it was worth, to draw applause by emotional outburst, this and many other characteristics that made the American actress' work interesting, were all missing. Instead, it was all suppression until the feeling of constraint had swept itself across the footlights, and the audience felt that if she didn't shriek it would—then, then came the great outburst that marked and measured the genius of the woman.

In the third play Madame Komisarzhovsky appeared as a mere girl of sixteen, whose innocence and ingenuousness are in strange contrast to the sordid conditions about her. The play in itself is weak and uninteresting. It was, however, a sweeping climax to her ability, for a finer impersonation one could not imagine.

If the month had a distinctive feature it was perhaps that it was slightly *à la Russe*.

The distinguished Russian actress

was partly responsible for this, the rest of the credit—or blame—lying with Mr. Sothorn, who disclosed to New York Laurence Irving's version of Dostoevski's "Crime and Punishment" under the title, "The Fool Hath Said: 'There is no God.'" It is not a play that will be very popular, for the story of *Rodion* has in itself no great charm for the average American theatergoer. If anything, he has a hearty dislike for all of the principles that actuated Dostoevski's hero, but Mr. Sothorn is none the less entitled to credit for letting us see a really able dramatic version of the famous book.

Of Mr. Sothorn's acting in the new play, there seems to have arisen some controversy. There are times when Mr. Sothorn appears to me absolutely uninspired, but his *Rodion* was to one of his audience at least a very appealing bit of acting. In no serious part he has played recently has he been more effective, for the very restraint that marked the character was suited to his personality.

From the tragic to the comic—strange to say, there was only one comic opera in the month. It will be remembered that at the beginning of the season the comic-opera fiends were falling over one another in their anxiety to get what was coming to them. Evidently what they got has tamed their troubled souls, if the entire offering of this species of entertainment numbers "one."

There are two things to be said in favor of this one. First, that it is the only one of the month, and second, that it really is funny. "Nearly a Hero," as it is called, is by no means an intellectual masterpiece, as far as the book is concerned, and at that the libretto is by a man who has turned out some of the best of American librettos, Harry B. Smith.

The fact that it enables Sam Bernard to be on the stage nearly all of the time shows that it accomplishes its purpose, for of the numerous German comedians, Mr. Bernard is certainly the funniest.

FOR BOOK LOVERS



Archibald Lowery Sessions

Announcements for the June number of Ainslee's. "The Reaping" is the best work Mary Inlay Taylor has yet done. "Mystery Island," by Edward H. Hurst, an adventure story of more than usual cleverness. A highly fantastic tale is Samuel Hopkins Adams' "The Flying Death." "The Smuggler," by Ella Middleton Tybout, improbable but rather interesting. Well told and with an air of reality is "For Jacinta," by Harold Bindloss. Roman Doubleday's "The Hemlock Avenue Mystery" a detective story with a fascinating element of suspense. "The Lady of the Mount," by Frederick S. Isham, full of exciting episodes. Frances Campbell's "A Shepherd of the Stars" attractive and very charming. T. Jenkins Hains' "Bahama Bill" is an interesting character in a collection of sea stories



THE June number of AINSLEE'S MAGAZINE is the first one of the summer season, and it has naturally been made up with more or less reference to that fact. Everybody prefers, so far as it is possible, to read about those things that are nearest to the interest of the present moment whether it is in the form of fiction or otherwise.

The complete novel is always, of course, the item in the table of contents which influences to a greater extent than any other the general character of each particular number, because, on account of its length, a greater opportunity is given to its author to develop and elaborate all the elements which enter into the construction of a good story. Something more is possible than glimpses of character, outlines of events—or mere episodes—and hints of situations, which short stories contain.

The author of the complete novel in the June number is W. A. Fraser, and the chief event of the story, its nucleus in fact, is a match between two famous horses, steeplechasers, made by their owners, one an Englishman and the

other an American. It is by no means a horse-race in the ordinary sense of the term, but a contest between two amateur sportsmen growing out of a spirit of rivalry partly personal and partly national.

Mr. Fraser has established a reputation in his novel "Thoroughbreds," for his knowledge and love of horses, his undoubted talent for writing about them, and his ingenuity in combining with them a thrilling love-story. "The International" is altogether worthy of the author of one of the most notable racing novels extant, and we feel that a very substantial privilege has been given to the readers of AINSLEE'S MAGAZINE.

The short stories will include one by an author only recently brought out by AINSLEE'S, one who is, in fact, a discovery made by this magazine and who made an immediate impression. Steel Williams' work has hitherto appeared only in this magazine, and, we hope, will continue to appear here exclusively. His story in the June number is Western, as all his work is, and is called "The Love Eyes of Trina."

Another item of special interest will be a short story by Ralph D. Paine. It is a thrilling sea story, a type which Mr.

Paine knows so well and has done so successfully. Those who liked Clark Russell's sea stories, and their name is legion, will give this story of Mr. Paine's a warm welcome.

Carter Goodloe, Austin Adams, Johnson Morton, Owen Oliver and Frederick M. Smith are authors of some of the other short stories that help to make of the June number an intensely interesting magazine.



"The Reaping" is a story of Washington's society. It is by Mary Imlay Taylor, and is published by Little, Brown & Co.

There is, of course, inevitably a political flavor to it; a Washington story would not be one without politics, even if, as it seems, the politics of fiction is never entirely convincing.

William Fox embodies this element in "The Reaping," and we are quite sure that no one just like him was ever known in Congress. There is nothing that his ambition could conceive too improbable of achievement. He apparently carried the destinies of the country in his hand and necessarily it was said to be merely a question of a very short time before he would become President.

Unfortunately for him, however, his meeting with Rose Temple put an end to all that, for he forthwith fell in love with her. This is the beginning of his political undoing, though there were other complications that helped to hasten it. Possibly his love-making might have proceeded untroubled to its happy consummation if the married woman in the case, personified in Margaret White, had not intervened. The story shows very clearly that a promising and ambitious young statesman should never allow the wife of a cabinet officer to fall in love with him, because it is something his constituents will object to and his lady-love will not understand.

The story has a good deal of interest, the plot is ingenious and on the whole well developed, there are some dramatic situations in it and the characters are

well drawn. It is the best work that Miss Taylor has done.



"Mystery Island" is an adventure story by Edward H. Hurst, published by L. C. Page & Co.

It is rather more than the familiar adventure story, owing partly to the unusual circumstances which started David Lindsay on his unlooked-for career in the Everglades of Florida, partly to the scene of the story and partly to the people he found there and the events which brought them there.

After the quarrel with his wife at Tampa Lindsay departed in a mental condition that might have led him into anything almost, and no reader need feel surprised at his being cast away, though it is not made altogether clear how he finally reached the island in the midst of the Florida swamps. The explanations made by Carrington, the woman who passed for his wife, and Muriel Hampton were sufficiently plausible to satisfy him in his more or less dazed condition, but as soon as he began to recover himself he could not fail to be sensible of something wrong. His gradual discovery of the facts concerning Carrington and the inevitable hostility which developed between the two men, the schemes which both devised to outwit each other, all are very well told and the interest is skilfully maintained throughout. Almost anything might have happened to defeat Lindsay's purpose at any time during the period of waiting for outside relief, and his position, which made it necessary for him to thwart Carrington at the same time protecting Muriel from the horrors which surrounded her, was one of extraordinary tension.



An expert knife-thrower and a pteranodon play the most important parts in Samuel Hopkins Adams' book, "The Flying Death," published by the McClure Company.

When it is said that the pteranodon

lived and flourished on the earth in the Mesozoic age—ten million years ago, according to some calculations—and has since been extinct, the sensation caused by the appearance on the Long Island beaches of one of these enormous flying lizards can be imagined.

Of course none of the little colony of residents and visitors at Third House dreamed of connecting the sequence of violent and mysterious deaths with a flying dragon; on the contrary, they attributed them to the juggler who was cast ashore from the wreck of the *Milly Esham*, and as it turns out some of the murders were actually committed by him. It is true that Haynes and Colton had suspicions which were really almost too monstrous for belief and were dismissed until they actually saw and encountered the beast.

It is a highly fantastic tale, and will probably suit such readers as have a taste for unusual horrors. It would not be the real thing, however, if the "love interest" were absent, and it is satisfactorily supplied in the tender passages between Helga and Edward Colton and Dolly Ravenden and Dick.



A rather unlikely tale but not altogether without interest is Ella Middleton Tybout's book, "The Smuggler," published by J. B. Lippincott Company.

The publishers speak of it as relating "the hair-raising things that happen to three American girls upon an island in Canada," but it is altogether probable that the emotion stirred in the reader will be amusement rather than suspense, for Miss Tybout herself appears not to take the "hair-raising things" very seriously. It is not so very strange, either, when one considers that the three American girls were out to have a good time, and that their names were Gabrielle, Elise and Elizabeth; the terror of unpleasant adventures might easily be mitigated under such circumstances.

Elise tells the story of what happened to them during their summer's outing, and it must be acknowledged that she does it with an eye to the

humorous side of things rather than the tragic, so that even when retribution finally overtakes the evil-doers, in the persons of Lord Wilfrid and Lady Edith, the scene, while dramatic, is by no means blood-curdling.

The mystery of the stolen jewels of Mrs. Bundy is the nucleus of the tale, and while it is rather well handled it does not justify the suggestiveness of the title which is misleading; it is a case of theft and not of smuggling.

The story would not be what it should be without a "love interest," and its shadow—or the opposite—pervades the book from beginning to end. Therefore the reader will be pleased with the information given by Elise on the last page that she and Gordon Bennett have started "a very small ship across a very small ocean," but that they "have engaged a pilot whose name is spelled with four letters"—not so cryptic as it sounds.



A rather deliberately told story of adventure is "For Jacinta," by Harold Bindloss, published by F. A. Stokes Company.

There is not quite as much action as one is accustomed to expect in a story of the kind, but what it lacks in this respect it makes up in the air of reality which pervades it. The scene shifts back and forth between the Canary Islands and an unlocated spot on the west coast of Africa, where the American Jefferson and his English colleague, Austin, are striving to force Fortune's hand by the salvaging of an abandoned steamship and a valuable cargo. The scene of the stranding of the ship and the experiences of the two men suggest very vividly that remarkable tale of Joseph Conrad's called "Heart of Darkness." There are some extremely gruesome details which, together with the descriptions of the hardships endured by the two men, are somewhat harrowing.

They are prompted to undertake this unpleasant task primarily from motives of love rather than for a desire of the material prize to be gained. Their

characters and previous careers justify the conclusion that both would have been willing to continue their more or less uneventful lives if they had not been spurred, by their infatuation for the two girls, Jacinta Brown and Muriel Gascoyne, to secure the means of providing for them. They realized that adventurers, such as they had been, could not in justice expect the two girls to accept them without the prospect of such provision.

It is a well told and interesting story in which the character of Jacinta is the dominating one throughout. She is an attractive girl, with plenty of poise and determination, who knows what she wants and how to get it.



"The Hemlock Avenue Mystery," by Roman Doubleday, published by Little Brown & Co., is an interesting story of the detective class, with some more or less original features which take it out of the ordinary run of such tales.

Beginning as a murder mystery it is something of an anticlimax for the reader to discover at the end that the killing of the lawyer, Fullerton, was not only not a murder at all, but that his end was an accident, made somewhat fantastic by the circumstances, the character of person who brought it about and by the precedent mystery that was made of it.

The young reporter, Lyon, who was chiefly instrumental in straightening out the tangle which involved Lawrence, the suspected man, was, it seems to us, almost too easily led astray by the clues which seemed to point to Edith Wolcott and Mrs. Broughton, and on the other hand was also too easily put on the right track by overfacile circumstances. It might be said in the vernacular that his luck was with him all the time.

The characters, with one exception, are done in a way to answer all the purposes of the tale, the exception being Kitty Taynter, who is almost too flippant and fluffy to play so serious a part as that for which she is cast.

Nevertheless the story makes good reading and very few people will fail to succumb to the fascination of the suspense.



Frederick S. Isham has, in his new book, "The Lady of the Mount," published by the Bobbs-Merrill Company, undertaken to write a story of the period of the French Revolution, and naturally it is made a story of action and of more or less romantic interest.

The scene is laid, not in Paris, but upon the French seacoast, probably Brittany or Normandy, as some of the incidents of the tale show it to be within easy reach of islands in the Channel.

The hero is a young Frenchman of noble family, who has been defrauded of his inheritance and, living as the protégé of a peasant, is forced to see his ancestral estates enjoyed by the man who wronged him. He becomes the leader of a band of outlaws, and in time encounters the daughter of his enemy and the result of their meeting is a love-story.

The story is filled with exciting episodes growing out of the depredations of the "Black Seigneur," as he is called, and the attempts made to capture him and put him to death, the climax being reached when the stronghold of the aristocrat is assailed by the mob coming in part from Paris after the fall of the Bastille, the happy ending of the love-affair of the Lady of the Mount and the Black Seigneur and the restoration to the latter of his estate.



"A Shepherd of the Stars," by Frances Campbell, published by E. P. Dutton & Co., is a very charming tale of the adventures in Morocco of three English ladies, or rather of one English lady and her two nieces, who are really hardly more than young girls.

Aunt Morgan, Felicia and Pickle undertake the journey for the benefit of the former's failing health, or rather the aunt does and the two children insist upon accompanying her under the pre-

text of taking care of her. It is well for the story that they did so, for without their presence there would have been little incident and excitement, and no love-story. Pickle, the youngest, is one of the type of children, full of cheerful animal spirits, in whose neighborhood something unexpected is continually happening. Felicia has reached the age when she is beginning to show signs of maturity, intellectually and emotionally, and the presence of the attractive Irishman, O'Donnell—affectionately called "Mac" by Pickle—brings about the usual results.

O'Donnell is not what he appears to be, and it is not until the end of the story that he is shown to be more desirable.

There is a good deal of descriptive writing in the book, most of which is, however, more attractive than such matter usually is. Among the characters introduced is the bandit, Rasuli, who frightens the party by carrying off the two girls, but he returns them in safety after his mother's curiosity about them is satisfied.



A volume of stories of the sea is published by L. C. Page & Co., entitled "Bahama Bill," the work of T. Jenkins Hains.

The hero of this collection of stories is a big West Indian negro, the mate of the *Sea Horse*, one of a swarm of wrecking boats that rendezvous about the Florida reefs.

Bahama Bill is almost an amphibious creature, as much at home in the sea as on the deck of the wrecking sloop or on land, a man who apparently knows no fear, except that of a chance encounter with a shark.

As may be inferred from his occupation he has very few scruples as to either law or good morals, and on more than one occasion is known to open the seams of a vessel surreptitiously in order to provide occupation and reward for his associates on the *Sea Horse*.

Nevertheless he is an interesting character as a number of people find out, some to their advantage and some to their cost. In spite of his vocation he is capable of some fine feeling, the consistent display of which toward Captain Smart forces a modification of the latter's disapproval.



Important New Books.

"Old Wives for New," David Graham Phillips, D. Appleton & Co.

"The Heart of a Child," Frank Danby, Macmillan Co.

"The Marquis and Pamela," Edward H. Cooper, Duffield & Co.

"The Dissolving Circle," Will Lillibridge, Dodd, Mead & Co.

"Tangled Wedlock," Edgar Jepson, McClure Co.

"True Stories of Crime, from the District Attorney's Office," Arthur Train, Charles Scribner's Sons.

"Fennel and Rue," William Dean Howells, Harper & Bros.

"The Metropolis," Upton Sinclair, Moffat, Yard & Co.

"Folks Back Home," Eugene Wood, McClure Co.

"The Judgment of Eve," May Sinclair, Harper & Bros.

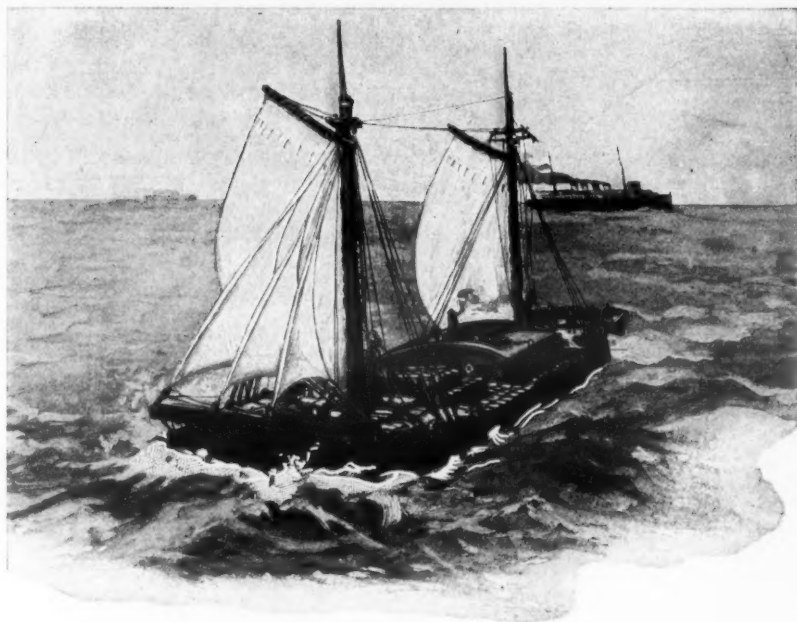
"The Call of the Deep," Frank Brown and Frank T. Bullen, E. P. Dutton & Co.

"The Footprint," Gouverneur Morris, Charles Scribner's Sons.

"Proposals to Kathleen," Mrs. W. K. Clifford, A. S. Barnes & Co.

"The Chichester Intrigue," T. Cobb, John Lane Co.

"The Sacred Herb," Fergus Hume, G. W. Dillingham Co.



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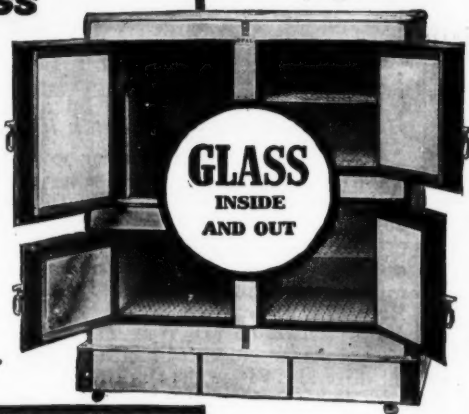
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NEW PERFECTION Wick Blue Flame Oil Cook-Stove

is very powerful, but being *concentrated* at the opening on the top of the stove, all surface radiation (the cause of over-heating in a coal or wood stove) is avoided.

Thus, though the "New Perfection" Oil Stove is a wonderfully quick and easy cooker, kitchen discomfort is almost entirely eliminated by it. Nothing adds more to the pleasure of a summer at home than a "New Perfection" Oil Cook Stove in the kitchen. Made in three sizes, fully warranted. If not at your dealer's, write our nearest agency.

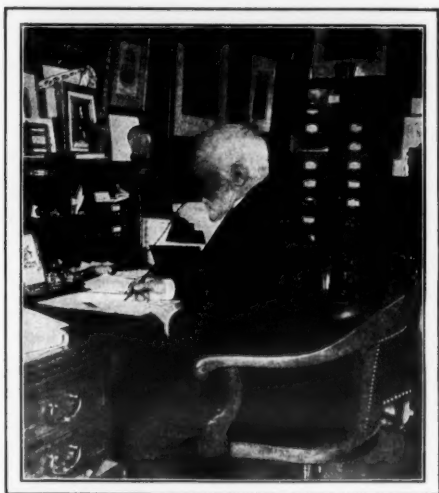


The **Rayo LAMP** All that a lamp should be the Rayo is. Well made —ornamental— not easily tipped over— has perfect combustion—greatest volume of light for oil consumed— burns longest with one filling.

If not with your dealer, write our nearest agency.

STANDARD OIL COMPANY
(Incorporated)

Tell the substitutor: "No, thank you, I want what I asked for. Good-bye."



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ANDREW CARNEGIE AT HIS DESK IN HIS
NEW YORK HOME

Owners of America

1. Andrew Carnegie

By Alfred Henry Lewis

HE is active, keen, urbane, aggressive, ambitious, affable, selfish, friendly, cautious, never forgets, seldom forgives, helps others, helps them the more readily when it helps Carnegie, keeps his right hand posted as to what his left's about, has no spun-glass sentimentalities, would like to get a dollar back for every dime put out, and is not wholly decided whether he would sooner be rich than be right."

That is Mr. Lewis' acute character sketch of the man, of whom he further says, "Every man and woman and child between the oceans is serf to Mr. Carnegie, and directly or indirectly must pay him tribute." And then he shows just how this is true by giving in a few tremendous figures—figures that amaze and stun the reader—the almost inconceivable power and resources of the Steel Trust, of which Andrew Carnegie is still the real head and brain.

The whole very significant article, of which these are details, appears in *Cosmopolitan Magazine* for June—out May 1—and is only the first of a series, which, we dare to think, will

prove one of the most vitally interesting which has ever appeared in any American magazine. In this series, "Owners of America," the sixty or seventy men under whose control is virtually concentrated the whole wealth of America will be discussed in an entirely new and compelling manner. In early issues *Cosmopolitan* will pay its respects to Thomas F. Ryan, J. Pierpont Morgan, and many others, not only those whom everybody knows by name, but also certain men—numbers of them—who have hitherto assiduously kept out of the public eye.

In order to acquaint as many as possible with these striking articles, we are making the following temporary introductory offer: Simply send twenty-five cents to-day—at our risk—and we will mail you the magazine for three months, containing many of these articles, together with a wealth of other high-class magazine features. The price of a year's subscription still remains, for a limited time, at only \$1, although single copies now cost 15 cents each on the news-stands. Address, *Cosmopolitan Magazine*, Desk M, 2 Duane Street, New York City.

Tell the substitutor: "No, thank you, I want what I asked for. Good-bye."



Prepare For Expected Motherhood By Insuring Health to Mother and Baby

As maternity approaches how great is the anxiety of the expectant mother. At what other time is it so important that her strength should radiate with the superb vitality of perfect womanhood? Called upon to bear a double burden, nourishing and strengthening food must be provided in plenty. And then there comes the time of suffering, the dread and realism of which can be greatly lessened if the way is steadily prepared by the liberal use of

Pabst Extract The "Best" Tonic

This rich wholesome food, combining the nutritive and tonic properties of malt and hops, is quickly assimilated by the system. It gives strength to the muscles, revitalizes the blood, and furnishes nourishment in abundance for the growing child. At the same time it calms the nerves, induces sweet, refreshing sleep for mother and babe and assures strength, vigor and health to both.

Pabst Extract, The "Best" Tonic, being a predigested liquid food, is welcomed by the weakest stomach. It relieves insomnia, conquers dyspepsia, strengthens the weak, builds up the overworked, helps the anaemic, feeds the nerves, assists nursing mothers and invigorates old age.

At All Druggists—Insist Upon It Being Pabst

Booklet and Picture, "Baby's First Adventure," sent free on request.

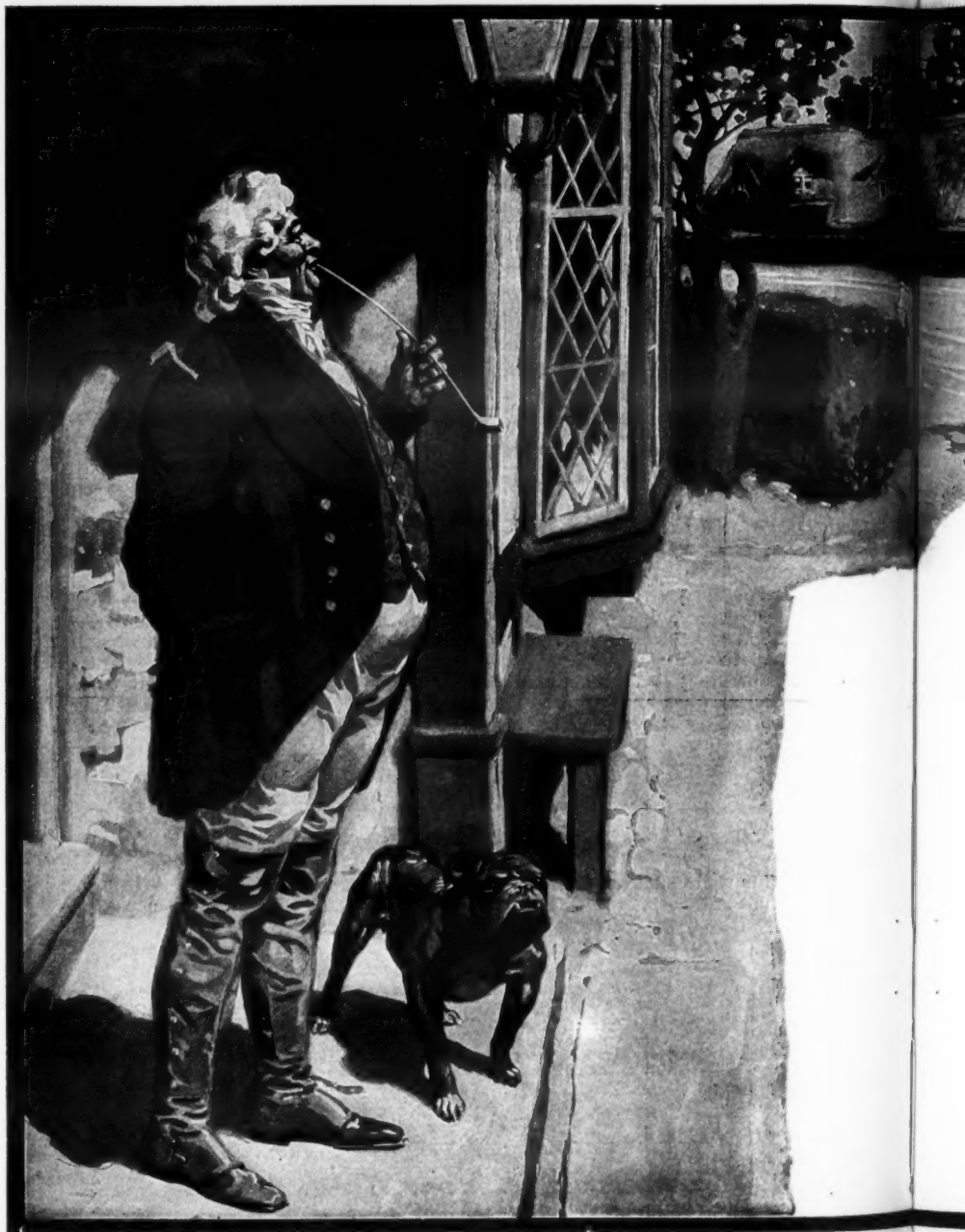
PABST EXTRACT CO.

DEPT. 29

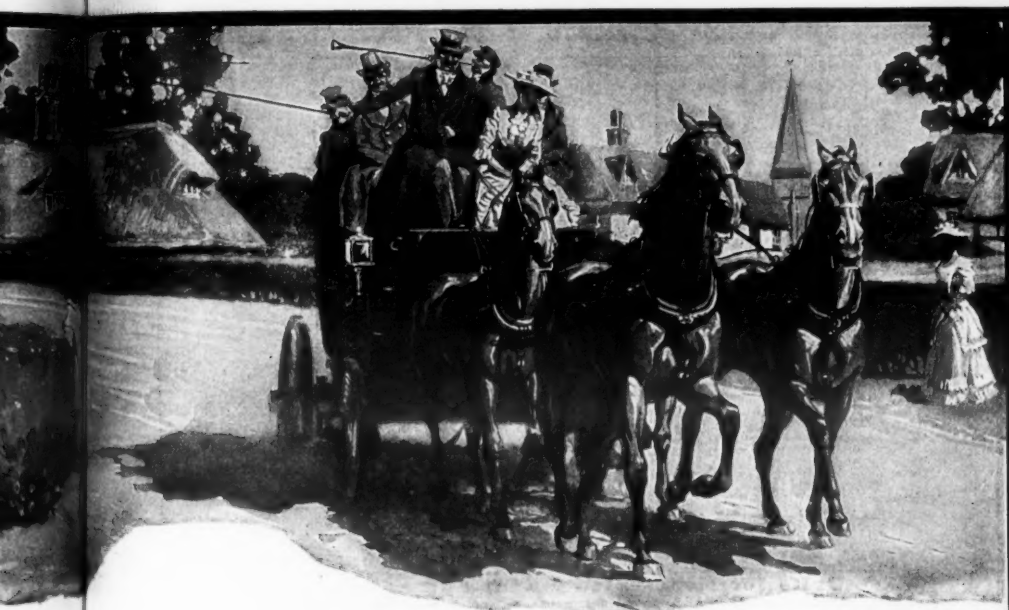
MILWAUKEE, WIS.



Tell the substitutor: "No, thank you, I want what I asked for. Good-bye."



Tell the substitutor: "No, thank you, I want what I asked for. Good-bye."



Old English Curve Cut

☛ The mild smoke—no “heaviness.” The cool smoke—burns gently. Convenient—in a curved box that fits the pocket. Economical—“a slice to a pipeful.” Made of the richest Burley leaf. Sold in more countries than any other pipe tobacco.

\$3,750 Prize Limerick Contest

☛ The makers of OLD ENGLISH CURVE CUT are conducting a fascinating Limerick Contest for May, June and July, 1908. This contest is open to everyone, free of any entrance charge or consideration whatsoever.

☛ Prizes aggregating \$3,000 in cash and \$750 worth of presents are given to those who supply the best last lines. This incomplete Limerick for May is as follows:

Cried a smoker, “Alas for my plight!
“Wife objects to my smoking at night.”
But his friend said, “Tut, tut,
“Smoke Old English Curve Cut,

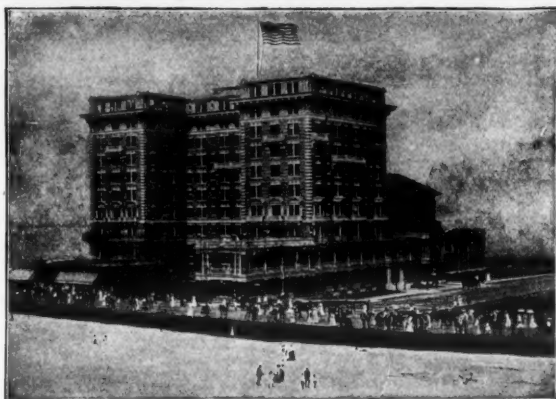
The fifth line should rhyme with the first two lines, and it is for you to compose it.

☛ In sending in lines, write plainly with full name and address. The above information enables you to enter the contest, but if you are interested in regard to the details in the matter of prizes, full particulars will be mailed you free, upon request to the undersigned.

Old English Curve Cut is 10c a box

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"Isn't my
Mamma pretty!"



Every little girl in
the land could say this
if every mother would
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tions against wrinkles
and sallow, lifeless skin.

The remedy is so simple and inexpensive. She
should learn that an occasional massage with

POMPEIAN Massage Cream

GIVES A CLEAR, FRESH, VELVETY SKIN

It contains no grease and cannot promote the
growth of hair. It is scientific—you rub it *into* the
pores of the skin and then rub it *out*, clearing them of all
clogging dirt—leaving them clean and ready to perform their
natural duties.

Pompeian Massage Cream is soothing and "smoothing" in
its effect—the massage increases the blood circulation, takes
away all flabbiness and renders the face plump, rounded and
with a natural, ruddy glow—the inevitable result of *health*.

Pompeian is the largest selling face cream in the world,
10,000 jars being made daily. It is not a "cold" or "grease"
cream to fill the pores, but a massage cream that com-
pletely cleanses the pores.

WOULD YOU LIKE A FREE SAMPLE?



Also our illustrated book on Facial
Massage, an invaluable guide for the
proper care of the skin. Price 50c.
and \$1.00 per jar, sent postpaid to
any part of the world, on receipt of
price, if your dealer does not have it.



POMPEIAN MFG. CO., 34 Prospect Street, Cleveland, Ohio

Pompeian Massage Soap is appreciated by all who are par-
ticular in regard to the quality of the soap they use.
For sale by all dealers—25 cents a cake; box
of 3 cakes, 60 cents.

Name.....

Address.....

CUT OUT ALONG DOTTED LINE, FILL IN AND MAIL TO SEND POSTAL ORDER

Pompeian
Mfg. Co.
34 Prospect St.
Cleveland, Ohio

Gentlemen:—
Please send, with-
out cost to me, one
copy of your book on
facial massage and a
liberal sample of Pompeian
Massage Cream.

Tell the substitutor: "No, thank you, I want what I asked for. Good-bye."

THE STRAND MAGAZINE

Summary of Contents for May, 1908.

Artists and Beauty

Being eight colored photographs of types of beauty with the Opinions of Eminent Painters.

Reminiscences and Reflections of Sir John Hare

the Actor. Written with a force and style that compels the interest of the reader in every line.

My African Journey. II.—Around Mount Kenya.

By the Rt. Hon. Winston Spencer Churchill, M. P.

A second instalment of a very entertaining account of his journey through Africa.

"Salthaven," by W. W. Jacobs

Pure, unadulterated, consistent humor.

Envoys of Agriculture

Telling of one sphere of the work done by our Department of Agriculture in providing for new and valuable specimens of vegetation for cultivation by our farmers, in all parts of the United States.

Puzzles From Games

To those interested in puzzles this will prove a most interesting article. The puzzles are all distinctly original and of great interest.

Four Complete Stories

of surpassing interest; full of action and adventure:—

IN THE DAYS OF THE OLD REGIME.....By C. C. Andrews
JOHN ADAMS' LOVE AFFAIR.....By E. Price Bell
THE MYSTERY OF THE MANAHAKI.....By J. Vincent
THE COUSINS.....By W. B. Maxwell

THE HOUSE OF ARDEN. By E. Nesbit.

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A LESSON IN GEOGRAPHY. CURIOSITIES.

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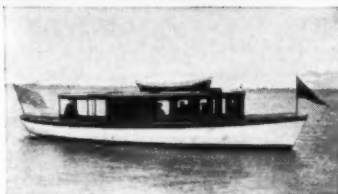
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For further information examine our Stock. 1626 Broadway, New York; 182 Milk St., Boston; 182 Jefferson Ave., Detroit; 38 Delaware Ave., Camden, N. J.; 1610 Michigan Ave., Chicago; 321 First Ave. South, Seattle, or send 4 cents for Catalog No. 1, to

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We're Going to Raise Your Salary

Such scenes as this are actually taking place every day. Invariably the man who gets the raise is the *trained* man—the expert—while the *untrained* man plods along at the same old wage.

If you're poorly paid and have ambition you're too good a man to be kept down; and you *wouldn't* stay down if you only knew how easily you can acquire the training that will put you in the lead. It doesn't cost you anything to find out how you can accomplish this—*how you can have your salary raised*. The only requirement is the ability to read and write. Simply mark the attached coupon and mail it now to the International Correspondence Schools.

During February 676 students voluntarily reported salary increases and promotions received as a direct result of I. C. S. training.

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Please explain, without further obligation on my part, how I can qualify for a larger salary in the position before which I have marked X

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Telephone Engineer
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"In Uric Acid Diathesis, Gout, Rheumatism, Lithaemia, and the like, Its Action is Prompt and Lasting."

George Ben. Johnston, M. D., LL.D., *Richmond, Va., Ex-President Southern Surgical and Gynecological Association, Ex-President Virginia Medical Society, and Professor of Gynecology and Abdominal Surgery, Medical College of Virginia:* "If I were asked what mineral water has the widest range of usefulness, I would unhesitatingly answer, **BUFFALO LITHIA.** In Uric Acid Diathesis, Gout, Rheumatism, Lithaemia, and the like, its beneficial effects are prompt and lasting. . . . Almost any case of Pyelitis and Cystitis will be alleviated by it, and many cured. I have had evidence of the undoubted Disintegrating, Solvent and Eliminating powers of this water in Renal Calculus, and have known its long continued use to permanently break up the gravel-forming habit."


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is a scientific instrument. When applied there is no sensation or nervous shock, but the body immediately begins to attract quantities of oxygen, through the lungs, and the pores of the skin. This oxygen feeds the fires of life. It sets the heart in active motion, the pulse becomes stronger, and the red color of the blood is rapidly restored. It adds vitality, strength and energy, purifies the blood, produces appetite and the ability to digest food, restores the nerves to tranquility and insures perfect sleep. The Electropoise is positively indestructible. It lasts a lifetime. It saves the expense of medicine. The first expense is the only expense. For all minor ills it is ever ready, and in those more serious and grave complaints it is the sheet anchor on which greatest reliance can be placed.

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telling us the size of your room,
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It means a great
deal to him and he
will never know how
much until he fol-
lows out our sugges-
tion.

DID YOU EVER MOVE YOUR OFFICE DESK SO YOU COULD LOOK UNDER IT?

What was there? Dirt,
dust, disease breeding
dust, filth that was
rotting away, pollut-
ing the atmosphere.

Every draught stirs
up this poison and
you breathe these
little dust particles
from six to eight
hours a day.

If you do not believe it is there look and see,
Gunn Sanitary Desks differ from all others,
because they

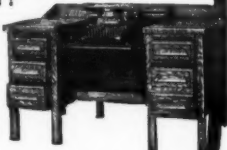
Stand Up Off the Floor

No dust can accumulate without your seeing it.
A broom can reach under it everywhere.

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Send to us to-day for our catalog on our Sanitary
line of office desks. They come in quar-
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FITTING
FINALE
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—GREEN AND YELLOW—

This famous cordial, now made at Tarragona, Spain, was for centuries distilled by the Carthusian Monks (Pères Chartreux) at the Monastery of La Grande Chartreuse, France, and known throughout the world as Chartreuse. The above cut represents the bottle and label employed in the putting up of the article since the Monks' ex-pulsion from France, and it is now known as **Liqueur Pères Chartreux** (the Monks, how-ever, still retain the right to use the old bottle and label as well), distilled by the same order of Monks, who have securely guarded the secret of its manufacture for hundreds of years, taking it with them at the time they left the Monastery of La Grande Chartreuse, and who, therefore, alone possess a knowledge of the elements of this delicious nectar. No liqueur associated with the name of the Carthusian Monks (Pères Chartreux) and made since their expulsion from France is genuine except that made by them at Tarragona, Spain.

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Sole Agents for United States.

Tell the substitutor: "No, thank you, I want what I asked for. Good-bye."

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We have opened this classified advertising section, and invite all reputable advertisers to come in —no display—all must be set in uniform type—no objectionable advertisements accepted—minimum space, four lines; maximum space in this section, thirty lines. Our aim will be to eliminate all questionable advertisements, and we bespeak our readers' assistance to help keep this section clean and profitable to all. Rates, \$2.25 a line, which includes POPULAR and SMITH'S Magazines, making a total of 4,000,000 readers—the cheapest and best Classified Advertising medium on the market. Next issue of the AINSLEE'S closes May 1st.

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Business Opportunities—Continued.

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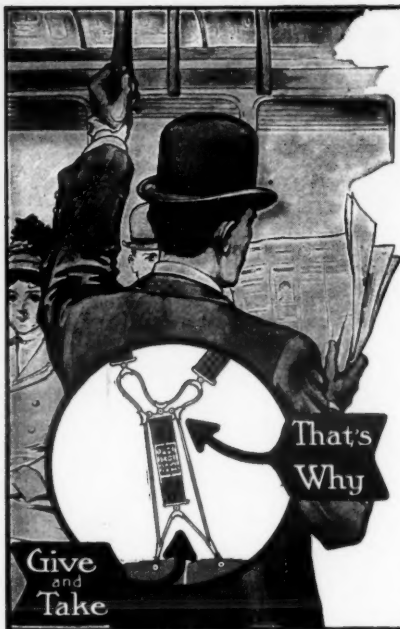
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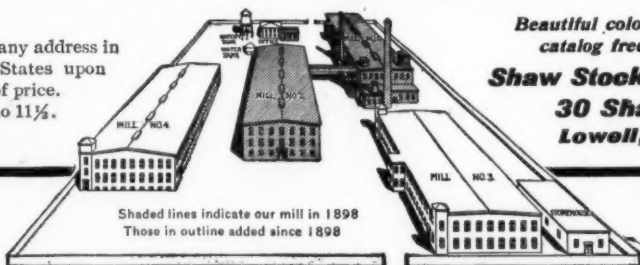
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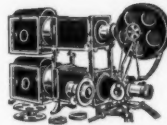
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BOAT PATTERNS \$1.50 and up.

Anyone can build a boat by using my exact size printed paper patterns and illustrated instruction sheets, telling how to do every little detail. You cannot fail to build as good a boat as the professional boat builder. My boat catalogue shows all kinds of boats and tells how anyone can build a boat from my patterns. Write for it today.

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Owing to my immense factory facilities, I can, in many cases, supply knock-down frames, all ready to put together, at a lower price than you would pay for suitable raw material.



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3 h. p. Type E \$65.00

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A Postal Brings It FREE!

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The natural way to preserve bodily health is to exercise every organ. The Moon Massage Vibrator will do this for you. It stimulates the blood circulation. It breaks up congestion, which is the forerunner of disease.

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Pains and aches tell where congestion exists—where the blood circulation is impaired.

Vibratory stimulation with the Moon Massage Vibrator is proper exercise. It can be applied directly to the affected part.

MOON Massage Vibrator
"The little home doctor"

This localized exercise with the Moon Massage Vibrator increases the blood circulation and sends it to nourish the weakened tissue in every part of the body. It promotes

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It invigorates when applied to the nervous system. The Moon Massage Vibrator aids your digestive power. It strengthens the muscular walls of the stomach. It increases the flow of the digestive juices. Makes the liver, lungs and every organ perform their functions with renewed vigor.

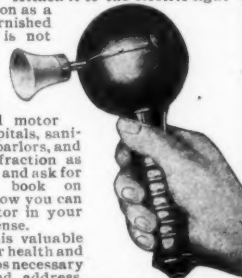
The skin, properly fed, assumes a hue of health. Exhilarated nature takes on increased vitality.

In a word, the Moon Massage Vibrator brings health without drugs.

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Half the enjoyment of the summer vacation depends on the choice of the right place. There's a right place for everybody. You will find it described in the 1908 Summer Book of the Lackawanna Railroad, entitled

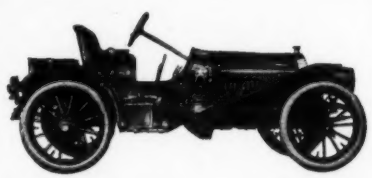
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a beautifully-illustrated book of 112 pages and a practical guide to the best places for fishing, hunting, golfing, motoring, climbing, sailing, swimming or any other sport or recreation. The book will tell you the one best place to go to, the right way to go, and the best place to stay. It gives list of hotels, rates, railroad fares, etc.

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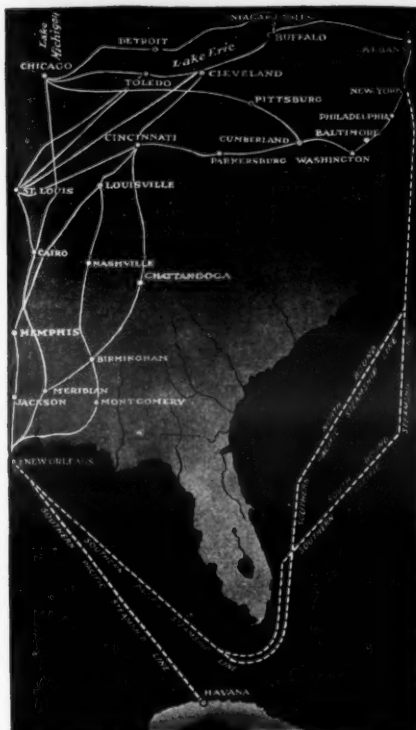
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THIS GUARANTY COUPON—IN YELLOW
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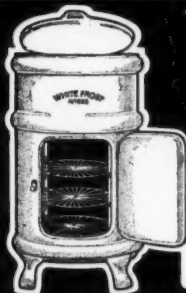
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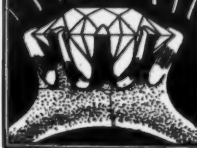
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"THE MAGAZINE THAT ENTERTAINS"



AINSLEE'S MAGAZINE has been consistently supplying its readers with what they themselves voluntarily testify to be the highest quality of fiction, and it continues to do it in spite of the hard times. Indeed, it may be truly said that, since the financial disturbances last autumn, AINSLEE'S has never been so good uniformly. The June number is going to be up to this standard. It opens with a complete novel by

W. A. FRASER

which he calls "*The International*." It is an exciting story with a profound love interest and contains a description of a match race between two horses owned respectively by an Englishman and an American, one of the best that we have ever read.

Among the short stories is a thrilling love tale of the sea by **Ralph D. Paine** who has established a reputation for this type of fiction. His stories are always popular, and "*John Janvin, Shipmaster*" is one of his very best.

Another Western tale by **Steel Williams**, entitled "*The Love Eyes of Trina*," will be in the June table of contents. **Mr. Williams** has appeared exclusively in AINSLEE'S and will continue to do so. He has displayed a real genius for this kind of fiction.

A very delightful story with a child interest for grown-ups is **Fanny Kemble Johnson's** tale, entitled "*The Draw*," as fine a story of its kind as we have ever published.

Other short stories will be by **Austin Adams, Frederick M. Smith, Owen Oliver, Johnson Morton, Carter Goodloe** and **Margarita Spalding Gerry**.

A special feature of the June Number will be an article by **Rupert Hughes**, entitled "*First Aids to the Unmusical*," in which Mr. Hughes tells how people who love music but are not educated musicians may have all the advantages of the latter.

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Here's savor that will delight:
Nutrition you will relish.
A clean, pure food, made on honor
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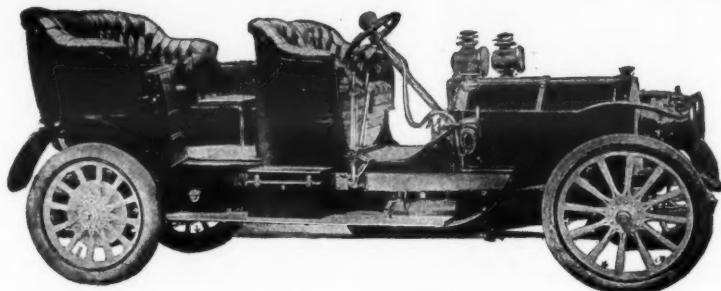
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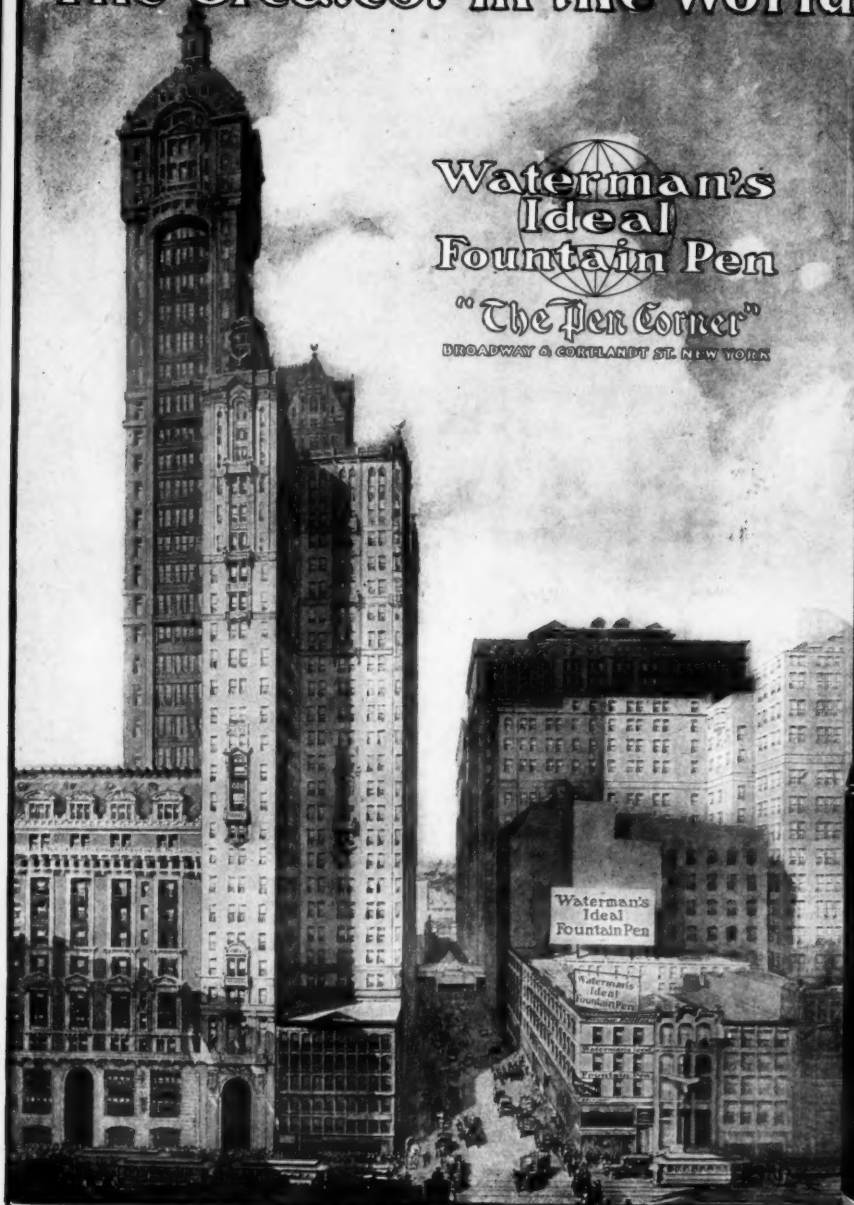
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